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WIVES OF THE PROPHET

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By
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Wives of the Prophet

COLOSSAL EGOTIST, RIBALD WIT, HANDSOME GIANT, RUTHLESS enemy, loud-mouthed braggart, magnificent villain, eloquent orator, organizing genius, religious charlatan, great administrator, master politician, cheap exhibitionist—Joe Smith, the Prophet of the Mormon Church, worshipped as a martyred saint by half a million souls in the United States to-day, was all of these. He is probably the most spectacular personality in the whole of American history. He created a great private empire in the Middle West. He ruled his tens of thousands of converts like an Oriental despot. And when his gigantic lust demanded more and more women, he successfully promulgated among his devout, strait-laced puritanical followers a new moral code embracing polygamy. In this brilliant novel, Sydney Bell has authoritatively recreated the life and times of Joe Smith, vividly picturing for the reader the ecstasy, the heart-break, the exaltation, and the disillusion of the women whose lives he dominated. The stories of Emma, Felicity, and Susa are deeply moving and unforgettable. *Wives of the Prophet* should appeal to all those interested in the dramatic recreation of American history, as well as those who enjoy a significant human story well told.

Chapter One

THE MOON WAS NOT YET RISEN, BUT THE EASTERN SKY, FAINTLY luminous, cast shadowy outlines over the wild and desolate country. In the distance massive mountains lay ponderously inert, as if wrapped in an eternal sleep. In the foreground an isolated and barren hill, rising like a dimly-lighted stage curtained on three sides by a sweeping circle of dark low-lying foothills, dropped precipitously to a river, beyond which a broad, roughly undulating valley stretched into the far-distant horizon. Mounds of fresh earth scattered about the flat summit of the hill loomed above the jagged edges of numerous black pits, which appeared in the spectral light like monstrous gaping graves.

Wilderness Hill on midnight of Good Friday in the year 1826 was the scene of a strange pantomime.

Suddenly, piercing the awful silence, came the weird plaint of a loon, and a startled cry, quickly smothered, escaped from the almost indiscernible form of a young girl huddled close to a towering boulder. Trembling from fright, she cowered deeply into the browlike shelter of the large rock.

Would they never come! Surely she had hidden here for hours! Why had she dared upon this foolish venture! If only she were safe at home!

A flood of contrition swept over her, but at thought of the perilous demon-haunted path separating her from the warmth and protection of her little room, she shuddered and crouched closely into the man's heavy coat she was wearing.

Minutes passed. . . .

Soon, along the tortuous path which, in and out among large boulders, wound up from the river, she saw the large figure of a tall young man wrapped in a cloak. He climbed the precarious ascent quickly and surely, like one familiar with the way. Emerging from the shadows on to the top of the hill, he walked directly to the largest of the pits, dropped a small bag to the ground, opened it, and took out a white cloth, which he spread over the flattened top of a wide rock. On the cloth he placed a hunting knife, a forked stick, and a small square box. Then, glancing down the path he had just ascended—as if assuring himself that he was alone—he turned again to the pit and stood gazing intently into its depths.

The girl with lessening fear and wide-eyed excitement watched him fixedly.

In a few moments there appeared from the path another figure—that of an old and stooped man leading a small black dog on a leash. He picked his way furtively across the gashed hill to where the young man stood. No greeting passed between

them. As if by previous understanding, they waited silently, peering into the darkness below. The young man circled his long arms in ceremonious gestures before him and mumbled strange unintelligible words, as if pronouncing some magic charm over the cavernous depths. The little dog fidgeted nervously at every slight sound or movement in the deathful stillness. At the hollow "oo-oo" of a distant owl, it set up a long mournful cry, startling the engrossed men. The younger, suppressing an impatient oath, reached over and slapped the frightened creature into whimpering submission. The old man lifted it into his arms and gently patted its head until its fear subsided.

The shadow of the girl against the rock remained tense—immobile. . . .

The sky grew lighter and the hills and ravines of the rugged country took on more definite form. Just as the round edge of a reddish moon rose over the rim of a distant mountain, the young man cupped his hands about his mouth and emitted three weird, loonlike cries. Mysterious, melancholy, ominous, they penetrated into endless distance. The girl started, pressing cold fingers against her quivering lips. The old man clutched the little black dog more closely under his coat until the ghostly echoes died away. . . .

Shortly, fantastic forms, distorted by the shadows, ascended the path. The heavy quiet of the night was broken only by the stones loosened by their groping feet. They emerged singly into the faintly lighted circle of the hill and moved like grotesque spectres across the ground towards the pit. Without direction they formed themselves into a ritualistic circle about the young man who stood in their midst, tensely erect, as if oblivious of their approach. In a silence of growing immensity they concentrated their gaze upon the tall, rapt figure. Again the shrill cry of a night bird, like the sound of a supernatural voice, pierced the oppressive quiet.

The shadow against the rock quivered. . . .

The reddish moon was now well into the sky. The cloaked figure in the centre of the circle, his eyes half closed, slowly raised his long powerful arms towards the moon and like a high priest began to chant. From low, sepulchral tones, his voice rose in slow crescendo to demonic intensity and pitch, then quickly subsided to an almost inaudible mumble:

"Abia, obra, sabis
Abia, obra, sabis
It is not day, nor yet day
It is not day, nor yet morning
It is not day, nor yet day
For the moon is shining brightly
Abia, obra, sabis
Abia, obra, sabis."

Three times he repeated the incantation. The solemn forms in the circle stood rigidly fixed. The girl, forgetting fear, crept closer along the edge of the boulder.

Slowly the enchanter lowered his arms. The old man, clutching the dog, lifted the forked stick from the white cloth and placed it in his extended hands. Holding the two prongs firmly, the stick projected before him, the diviner, as if in a trance, bowed his head and spoke in solemn monotone:

“Stick, I grasp thee in the name of the Trinity!

Divining-wand, do thou keep the power
Which God gave unto thee the first hour!

We are searching hidden treasure—buried silver. Work to the money!”

Moving slowly to the edge of the pit, he cautiously felt his way into its depths. When he reached the bottom, he repeated:

“Divining-wand, do thou keep the power
Which God gave unto thee the first hour!”

There was a pause. After a moment, as if directed by some mysterious power within the extended stick, he walked automatically over the broken floor of the pit. The spectators, like black crows, stood above looking down, their eyes focused anxiously on the wand, barely discernible in the moonlight.

Suddenly it dipped downward! The diviner stopped short. All effort to hold the wand upright failed. Without a word he marked the spot with a large stone. As an irrepressible murmur of mingled awe and relief escaped the peering circle, the diviner raised a warning hand. Three times he walked about the pit and three times the wand darted downward as he crossed the marked spot. The mounting excitement of the watchers was manifest only in their hypnotic tension and fearful concentration on the pantomime below.

The girl glided stealthily from her hiding-place and, unnoticed, mingled with the men.

The old man with the dog picked up the cloth and objects on the rock and made his way into the pit. The others, as if by silent command, followed.

As they again formed a ritualistic circle, the diviner took the square box from the old man, opened it, and lifted out a small white stone shaped like the foot of a child. For some time he gazed at it closely, then solemnly intoned:

“Heaven above, heaven beneath
Stars above, stars beneath
All that is above is also beneath
Understand this and be happy.”

After a significant pause, he continued in broken staccato phrases: "It is here—as I have seen before—a ton of silver bars—buried by Spanish pirates—a Spirit guards the treasure—he demands the blood of a black animal—let us begin the sacrifice!"

Imperceptibly, the circle narrowed as the figures drew closer, fearful lest they lose a single word or gesture. The girl, with parted lips and widened eyes, forgetful of all caution, moved forward as though entranced until she stood directly behind the diviner.

With ceremonious precision, the white cloth was spread upon the ground. The old man placed the bewildered little dog in the centre. As it whined and struggled, the circle leaned forward, tense and staring. With a quick movement the diviner grasped the knife and slit the throat of the quivering beast.

In that instant, as the blood spurted over the white cloth, a scream, hysterical with terror, broke across the awful silence!

All turned in the direction from which it came—to the slender, cowering figure beside the diviner, who straightened rigidly, the bloody knife still in his hand. They stood in frozen horror at the discovery of a woman in their midst, uncertain of how to meet this unprecedented violation of their ritual. With one step the diviner, stern and accusing, leaped to the girl. She shrank away, hiding her head deep in the collar of the heavy coat. He grasped her shoulder roughly and, placing his hand under her chin, threw back her head.

Their eyes met in recognition—in hers, terror; in his, surprise. Without speaking he placed his finger on her lips, commanding her to silence. She crept back into the shadows of the pit.

Unperturbed by the interruption, the diviner returned to the ceremony. With a signal from the wand, two figures emerged from the circle, lifted the bleeding animal, and, dragging it over the spot at which the stick had thrice dipped, marked out a cross with the dripping blood. This finished, the diviner majestically indicated where the digging was to begin. Relieved from the sustained tension of silence and inactivity, the men took up the picks and shovels piled in one corner of the pit and set feverishly to work. . . .

The moon was now advanced into the sky and illumined the scene clearly. The men were obviously farmers. They wore loose, ill-fitting overalls, crumpled slouch hats, and high boots. Their clothing was patched and shapeless; their movements strong, awkward, methodical; their faces stolid and weather-beaten—those of men used to the hardships of frontier life. Under the distorting light of the moon they resembled the legendary ghouls said to inhabit the neighbouring hills.

The diviner took no share in the actual digging, but stood

closely by, directing the work with his wand. With autocratic gesture he shifted the digging from point to point, the men obeying his slightest indication with slave-like docility. Animated by the vision of gleaming bars of silver just within their reach, they laboured for hours with no sign of weariness or discouragement. The stillness of the night was broken only by the occasional cries of birds, the scurrying of animals through the underbrush, and the heavy monotonous beat of picks and shovels on the stubborn ground.

As the digging began, the girl made as if to slip away, but the diviner stopped her, commanding her to a spot well outside the circle. There, cold and solitary, huddled deep in her coat for warmth, she sat through the long hours, chastened and fearful. He gave no further indication that he was aware of her presence, but she was never for an instant unconscious of his vigilance. . . .

The hours passed. . . .

There was no cessation of labour, but the intensity slackened. Not one bar of silver had been found. The diviner, observing the increasing weariness and restlessness of the diggers and aware of the near approach of dawn, put down his wand, took up the magic stone, and strode into the midst of the exhausted men. As he raised his hand, the treasure hunters dropped their tools. Again—now reluctantly—they formed a circle. Discouraged, they knew what they would hear, but listened patiently as their priest, gazing into the stone, chanted:

“In the name of the Trinity, it is here—I see the treasure—a ton of silver bars—but it evades us—the Spirit is angry—it demanded the sacrifice of a black sheep and threatens us with revenge because we have tried to palm off a black dog—and it is angry because we have broken our vow of silence—O ye of little faith!—one of us will die—later we must try again to find the treasure—the night will soon be gone—go as you came—tell no one what has happened—the Spirit commands!”

Raising his hand in benediction, he repeated,

“Abia, obra, sabis . . .”

The disconsolate men clambered obediently from the pit. All except the old man trudged in single file across the hill and quickly disappeared below the precarious ascent up which they had come hours before.

When the old man—who would have remained to talk—had been commanded to follow the others and had vanished down the winding path, then—and not until then—did the diviner turn to the trembling girl. Approaching her, he drew her firmly to her feet. When she would have spoken, he quickly but not unkindly placed his finger again on her lips. He regarded her long and intently—with frank interest and desire. She did not shrink

from his scrutiny, but her face betrayed question and confusion. As he started to take her into his arms, she drew back in fear. He did not insist. With a slight shrug of his powerful shoulders, he led her out of the pit and they too in complete silence crossed the hill and disappeared down the path. . . .

Again peace and quiet took possession of Wilderness Hill. Below, reflecting the grey dawn streaking the east, the river flowed steadily on its way. Out of the distance a morning breeze drifted over the summit of the broken hilltop. But one evidence of the dark deeds of the night remained—the lifeless body of a little black dog.

Chapter Two

THE EARLY RAYS OF THE SUN LIGHTED A SCENE IN WHICH NO TRACE of the demoniacal night remained. Respectable, definite, unimaginative, the houses of Harmony awoke in the pale dawn and affirmed a cheerless, uncompromising orthodoxy. White frame structures with clean yards and ordered outhouses, they diffused piety and discipline, diffused it a little dishearteningly, in fact, as they monotonously succeeded each other down the wide level streets.

The Hale homestead summarized this quiet and assured orthodoxy. It stood on a slight eminence on the outskirts of the village, its dormer windows peering benignly over its lesser brethren below. There was nothing ostentatious about the house or its neatly arranged surroundings, but even a stranger to this backwoods section of north-eastern Pennsylvania would have marked here the residence of a family at once prosperous in business and substantial in character. The architecture was plain, direct, sturdy, and, in comparison with the frame houses of the village, possessed the dignity and assurance made possible by moderate affluence and social position.

The upper windows of this broad ledge-stone house caught the oblique rays of the rising sun and reflected them with such brilliance that the sloping roof glittered like a resplendent mass of dancing flames, as the young girl, flushed and breathless with her flight from Wilderness Hill, reached the entrance and quietly let herself into the dark hall along which she cautiously crept to the kitchen door. Opening the door carefully, she entered with a sigh of relief.

“Emma Hale!”

“Mother!”

The girl’s voice came in a terrified whisper as she peered into the dim corner beside the stove where a moderately large and stout woman sat wrapped in a great woollen comforter.

“Where have you been, Emma?” The girl stood silent. “Come here, child!”

Emma moved reluctantly and a bit defiantly across the large kitchen until she stood close to her mother. At sight of the troubled face she was suddenly repentant.

“Oh, mother, have you been here long?”

Mrs. Hale ignored the question. “Emma, have you been to Wilderness Hill?”

She did not answer, but in her silence her mother’s fears found confirmation. Over the homely, kindly face of Mrs. Hale there passed a look of despair.

"Oh, my daughter, how could you do this to us? Has that man bewitched you? You know what he is!"

"Yes, I do. He isn't what you think. He isn't like the men around here."

"Thank God for that. He's a dangerous man!"

"He isn't. You don't know him. You listen only to father."

"Emma, it would be the death of your father if he knew this. He must never know—never." Mrs. Hale, exhausted by worry and the night's vigil, lost her anger. She spoke sadly, imploringly, "My child, you must get over this. That man is evil. No good can come from him. I don't understand . . . What have we done to deserve this punishment? Your father would be disgraced. And Frank—what if he should find out?"

"It's none of his concern," the girl blurted resentfully.

"Now, Emma, you shouldn't talk that way. Frank has waited long enough. It's time you came to your senses and took him."

A nervous silence followed. Then Mrs. Hale came back to the major worry with a blunt question, "Surely no one knows you were out there—that you spent the night on Wilderness Hill with those—" She paused, unable to find a word strong enough to express her aversion.

"No—no one, except—Mr. Smith."

"How does he know?"

"He knows everything."

"But women don't do such things."

"Mother, you don't understand. I am different . . ." The girl hesitated, then, breaking down, suddenly confided, "Mr. Smith says I have powers . . . that I am clairvoyant . . . that I must help him."

A new fear entered Mrs. Hale's mind and she turned to her daughter in alarm. "Emma, has that man been talking love nonsense to you? You wouldn't—"

Before Emma could answer, a heavy step overhead sent both women into panic. Rising from her chair, Mrs. Hale hurried the girl out of the kitchen with the terrified injunction, "Get up to your room. Don't let anybody know!"

Emma crept stealthily to her room. She slipped out of her linsey-woolsey and into a calico dress. As she tied the ample gingham apron about her waist, she caught sight of herself in the mirror. This morning she paused to study her reflection intently—with new interest. He had told her that she was beautiful. Was it really true? She had always known that she was reasonably attractive. But beautiful? She examined every feature of her face in careful detail. The wide straight forehead and firm chin suggested intelligence and a certain unwavering strength of character, both perhaps inherited from her Scotch

father. The dark eyes and arched brows accentuated the definite and balanced proportions of a rather longish face. Her mouth was straight; her lips resolute, yet not lacking in sensuous warmth; her colour fresh and high, telling of health and limitless vitality. Her one proud claim to distinction was her hair; it was jet black, straight and lustrous. Parted in the middle and gathered low at the back of her delicately shaped neck, it formed a draped frame for her eager young face.

At this moment she was flushed and excited. She saw again the events of the night—weird, fantastic, mysterious. Was it possible that all this had happened to her—the hill, the dark figures, the sacrifice (the remembered cry of the little black dog sent a flash of pain across the reflection in the mirror), her own startled cry, his fingers upon her lips, and then, later, his hand touching her shoulder, their walk down the hill together, the things he had said and done. . . . Suddenly warmth flooded her body. She leaned against the dresser and gave herself up to an inexplicable ecstasy. . . .

Breakfast was never a garrulous hour in the Hale home. They were a sober, humourless people to whom even the details of life were a matter of grave concern. To Isaac Hale, as to many of the New England settlers who had emigrated to north-eastern Pennsylvania, life meant responsibility—a duty to be fulfilled, not a joy to be realized. A man who for the times had acquired considerable means, he had laboured honestly, industriously, and uncompromisingly for his church and family. His zeal for Presbyterianism was well known throughout the surrounding country. Many times he had secretly regretted that he had not been ordained, but his Scotch soul delighted in money-making, and the regret was compensated by a generous response to all the needs of the church.

Isaac Hale was little concerned with the complexities or subtleties of human nature. In his own phrase, “Right is right and wrong is wrong,” and each was unequivocally prescribed by Biblical precept augmented by Presbyterian dogma.

Although renowned for his pulpit oratory, at home Isaac Hale was a man of few words. That is not to say that he was not a good husband and father. He loved his family according to his light, but it was a cold white light and had given protection and comfort, but little warmth, to his wife and only daughter.

This morning he sat at the head of the table entirely oblivious of any perturbation in the minds of his women-folk. After the morning prayer, he proceeded to consume his porridge, salt pork, fried eggs, and corn bread in the same manner and order in which he had consumed them hundreds of mornings before at this same hour and at this same table. He ate with com-

placency and a sense of well-being. It was as if he said, "This is my house, my wife, my daughter, and who can say me nay?"

Although accustomed to little conversation at the table, the wife and daughter this morning were oppressed by the heavy silence. The room seemed filled with voices which at any moment might cry out their guilt—for guilty they felt. Mrs. Hale was nervous and ashamed. For the first time in her life she was hiding something from her husband. Added to her shame were her fears for Emma. Her safe little world seemed threatened.

Mrs. Hale did not exaggerate the vehemence of her husband's ire. If Presbyterianism was his consuming passion, then witchcraft and fanaticism were his deep aversion. He had often declared that of all the impositions which flesh is heir to, none ought to be more abhorred than those which come clothed in sanctity and religion. And he had defended with uncompromising determination the pure truths of Christianity, as he called them, against the wild fancies of the numerous knaves and fanatics infesting their community.

And it seemed to Mrs. Hale that Harmony had been continuously under the curse of some new cult ever since she and Isaac arrived here from their old home in Massachusetts. Jumpers, Barkers, Mutterers, Shakers, Crystal-gazers, Mesmerists, Hypnotists, Second-sighters, Jaorelites—each, in turn, had swept the country, capturing the credulity of the superstitious.

How often she had listened to Mr. Hale inveigh against these "assaults on Christianity." There was poor Mrs. Jameson. For twenty years she had occupied the same pew with the Hales, and now, only a few months ago, she had been converted by some self-styled Messiah who predicted that she would soon conceive immaculately and give birth to a prophet destined to save the world from its sins. In gratitude for this revelation the woman had given a large part of her savings to the impostor. She was over eighty and until this conversion had led an exemplary life.

Now the latest curse had come upon them in the form of divining or "peeking" as the neighbours called it. It was this craze which had brought Joe Smith to the town and trouble into her own house. Mrs. Hale was frightened as she perceived the implications of this unhappy situation.

Mr. Hale finished his coffee and prepared to quit the table. "I may not be home for dinner to-day. I've got to see Captain Buck and try to talk some sense into his stubborn head."

Mrs. Hale looked up in alarm. "What's wrong with Josiah?" "He's got that Joe Smith at his sawmill. They've been peekin' again for buried treasure."

"Is he stirring up trouble?"

"Trouble? He's set the whole community on its ears. Can't hear talk of anything else. Even the women are taken in by him. There are rumours already about him and Jenny Vale. Lazy, ignorant, irresponsible fellow! Takes people's money by promising them treasure. Calls himself a diviner! Bah! He's a son of Satan!"

"Does Josiah really believe there's a treasure buried on the hill?" Mrs. Hale spoke timidly, less interested in the treasure than in discovering Mr. Hale's full intentions.

"Claims he heard of one from the Indians. Got the farmers all excited. Took their money to bring that Smith and his peck-stone over. I hold Josiah responsible. If he doesn't call a halt, I'll have him read out of the church."

Emma was startled to hear her own voice speaking: "But, father, I don't think Joe Smith is what you say. He isn't bad."

"Isn't bad? What do you mean? What do you know about him?"

"Nothing, father." The girl was instantly on guard. "I've seen him . . . that's all. He doesn't *look* like what you say."

Mr. Hale turned upon his daughter in amazement mingled with wrath.

"Doesn't *look* like!" That's what other women might say, but I'm displeased to hear my daughter defend such a scoundrel! That man is an impostor—a worthless vagabond! He'll come to no good end. Don't be deceived by his good looks and smooth tongue—by what the man-struck village girls say. I never want to hear such talk from you again, do you hear?"

Mr. Hale rose abruptly and strode indignantly out of the house. The daughter, chastened, began clearing the dishes from the table.

"Emma, are you sure no one recognized you last night?"

"Yes, mother, I'm sure. I went up after the others and didn't come back with them. No one saw my face, except—" The girl spoke humbly, anxious to reassure her worried mother.

"Let us pray you are right. Whatever happens, your father must not know you were there last night. I dread to think of what will come to us all in case he . . . No, no, he must not!"

Fright leaped into Emma's mind as she interrupted her mother: "Father has no right to talk that way about Joe. He doesn't know him. If he did—"

"Daughter!" Mrs. Hale's voice was stern. "Your father loves you. You are his one pride. He has never failed you or made a mistake. He is always right. You are bewitched and do not know what you are saying."

Suddenly the woman's manner changed and she spoke pleadingly: "Emma, Emma, you are all we have. Do not break our

hearts. We have raised you a Christian and our hope is to see you married to an honest, righteous man—not to a tramp, a man who——” She broke off desperately: “Emma, promise me that you’ll never hurt your father. I’ll help you—stand by you—but he must be spared.”

Shaken by her mother’s suffering, the girl silently acquiesced and went soberly about the morning work. Too much had happened to her; she felt stunned and needed time to think.

Chapter Three

A FEW HOURS LATER A KNOCK SOUNDED. WHEN SHE OPENED THE door, Emma was surprised to find Frank. Seeing him there at that hour was in itself startling, but that he should have come on this particular morning seemed ominous. She greeted him briefly, allowed him to enter, and waited for an explanation.

"Guess you're a little surprised to see me this time of the day, Emma?" In spite of his efforts to appear casual, he was embarrassed and apologetic.

"Well—yes. Is anything wrong?"

"No . . ." he hesitated evasively. "I've just been down to the widow Hobson's. Passin' by here and thought I'd stop in."

Emma was not deceived. She looked at him intently for a moment and then asked bluntly, "What is it, Frank? What's brought you here this morning?"

He did not answer instantly. He was nonplussed by her directness.

Although somewhat older than Emma, Frank had never been entirely at ease with her. He had known her since she was a little girl, but partly because of Emma's own quick and dominating mind and partly because of the social cleavage between their families, he had always felt shy before her. She was a Hale—he was a Fetter. Her father was the most respected and powerful man in the community—his father had been the village drunkard. Security and protection had been Emma's portion; uncertainty and poverty his—until Mr. Hale had given him his chance. He had made good in Mr. Hale's store. His dogged persistency, his unerring honesty, and his loyal Presbyterianism had won the older man's interest and favour. The merchant had encouraged the boy, advancing him to a position of trust, not only in the store, but in all of his business affairs. As a final expression of approval, Mr. Hale had tacitly encouraged Frank's obvious love for his daughter. It was an open secret that Emma and Frank were "promised" to each other, and there was much speculation as to the probable time and magnificence of the wedding.

Frank's sense of gratitude to Mr. Hale was profound and reverential. His attitude towards Emma was a reflection of this gratitude. He was completely and hopelessly in love with her, but, things being what they were, his manner had been one of respect and patient waiting for the time when she would be ready to marry him. He was never the eager, aggressive lover, but always the worthy, attentive young man. Consequently, to Emma he had been "just father's trusted clerk"—the man whom she would some day probably marry. The thought neither

excited nor repelled her—that is, until a month ago, when Joe Smith came to town. Now everything was different. As she looked at Frank's stolid, troubled face, it was with impatience that she repeated her question:

“Tell me, why are you here at this hour?”

“I've come to ask you to marry me,” he said slowly and solemnly.

Emma gave a sigh of relief. “But, Frank, there's nothing new in that!” Her tone was light in an effort to break the tension.

Frank flushed. “I'm in earnest, Emma. I mean I want you to marry me soon—now.”

“Now? What do you mean, now? To-day?”

He ignored the touch of sarcasm as he answered with persistence, “Not to-day, but Sunday. I thought it all out. Parson Hoben will be here from Philadelphia to preach. Your father has always wanted him to marry us.”

She stared at him utterly amazed. “Why, that's to-morrow! Are you crazy? I don't know what you're talking about!” With a gesture of impatience, she rose and crossed the room as if eager to put more distance between herself and this madman.

Frank's eyes followed her with a look of dog-like pleading love. “I'm not crazy, Emma. I want to make you understand. Why shouldn't we be married to-morrow? We're going to be married sometime, aren't we?”

In startled confusion, Emma faltered, “Well, perhaps . . . But a wedding takes time.”

“Yes, and a lot of expense. Emma, we don't want that.”

“But why this sudden hurry? You've never been impatient before.”

He winced at the implied criticism, but answered with rising spirit, “No, and there I've been wrong. Perhaps it would have been better if I had. Emma, I'm tired of living in that little house alone. I want a wife.”

“It seems to me you want a housekeeper.”

“Emma! that isn't fair . . . You know I care for you.”

He walked over to her and placed one arm awkwardly about her shoulders, but when he attempted to kiss her, she shrank from him. In dismay he stepped back.

Aware that she had hurt him cruelly, the girl spoke more gently: “Don't, Frank . . . I'm sorry, but you mustn't—now.”

He walked away from her. After a little pause, he turned abruptly and begged, “Emma, will you marry me to-morrow?”

“No. Of course I won't!” She spoke with finality.

Mrs. Hale had entered the front room in time to hear the question and answer.

“Emma, why do you speak to Frank in that tone of voice?”

The girl, made uneasy by her mother's entrance, did not answer, but Frank turned to her with evident relief.

"Good morning, Mrs. Hale. I'm glad you've come in. Perhaps you can help me persuade Emma."

"To marry you, Frank?" she asked quietly. Then to her daughter: "I shouldn't think any girl would need persuading for that."

Emma remained silent. Frank liked Mrs. Hale. They understood each other. Secure in the knowledge of her sympathy, he spoke to her with an almost childlike pleading.

"You can see how it is, Mrs. Hale. I've been trying to make Emma understand that it's no use waiting any longer. Seems like I've been waiting for her most of my life. I haven't asked her to set a date before because I haven't been in a position to insist."

"Of course, Frank, that's all right. We know—you had to care for your mother."

"Yes, as long as mother lived, I didn't want Emma to have that responsibility. The last year was a pretty hard one for both of us—no place for a young girl."

A cloud of pain passed over his simple face and Mrs. Hale murmured with quick sympathy, "You were a good son to her, Frank. No mother ever had a better."

He looked his gratitude and went on haltingly, "The house seems pretty lonely now. I've saved a little money this last year and you know Mr. Hale gave me another raise a month ago. I think I can take good care of Emma now."

"I'm sure you could, Frank," Mrs. Hale agreed. Turning to her daughter and trying hard not to appear too eager, she said, "I think Frank's right, Emma, and I think he's done the right thing to come and speak his mind."

While this conversation was taking place, Emma's face had betrayed no emotion, but the mounting fear in her heart came into her voice when in reply to her mother's defence of Frank, she cried out, "But, mother, he wants to be married to-morrow, after church!"

Mrs. Hale turned to Frank in surprise. "Surely not to-morrow, Frank. A girl wants time to get ready for a wedding. You didn't mean that."

"I do mean that, Mrs. Hale. We've waited almost too long as it is."

The despair in his voice caused Mrs. Hale to reply sympathetically: "You've waited this long, Frank. It won't hurt to put it off a little longer. Give us time to get ready. I've always liked October weddings."

The strain was beginning to tell on the young man. He was not an articulate person, and it had taken all of his courage to

bring himself to the point of making this demand for an immediate marriage. When he found that matters weren't going well, he became excited and blurted, "I've got reasons for insisting on to-morrow!"

More than the words, the desperate tone in which they were spoken brought to full life the fears haunting the women all morning. There was a terrible stillness in the room. Then Emma, glaring at him in fearful anger, spoke resentfully:

"Just what do you mean?"

In that moment Frank remembered that she was Emma Hale, daughter of his benefactor. "God knows I mean no offence to you, Emma. I'm only doing what I think right for you. If I'm wrong, I ask your pardon."

Dreading what she feared she would hear, Mrs. Hale demanded, "I think you should tell us your reasons for speaking so. Seems to me you haven't been quite honest. Better tell us everything, Frank."

"Please don't ask me to do that, Mrs. Hale. I'm sorry I said the last . . . I bungled the thing—just because I wanted so badly to spare you."

"Spare us? Spare us what?"

Frank was in an agony of embarrassment and confusion. Mrs. Hale came to his help by asking gently, "Do you mean there has been talk, gossip, about you and Emma?"

"No, not about us. I wish it were only that. Then it would make no difference. We've done no wrong."

"Then the talk is about . . . Emma?" The young man lowered his head. "What do they say, Frank?"

As he still hesitated, fumbling for words, Emma faced him challengingly: "Out with it, please. Is it so terrible you are afraid to speak?" She thought she knew what he would say, but was totally unprepared for the shock his words gave her.

"They say you spent last night in Wilderness Hill with the peekers! They say you're going over to witchery! They say that you, the daughter of Isaac Hale, have sold yourself to the devil. They say—"

He stopped abruptly, alarmed by the horror of the words he had uttered. Mrs. Hale was incredulous.

"It isn't true . . . it can't be true. . . . What will . . ."

Emma's eyes burned with fury. "Is that *all* they say?"

Almost against his will, Frank looked directly at her. "They say that you and Joe Smith—that vile—"

Emma stopped him defiantly.

"You can't talk that way about Joe. What right have you—"

"Emma!" Mrs. Hale stopped her. "Be careful what you say."

But Emma ignored her mother's warning. Almost sobbing, she poured forth her grievances against her persecutors.

"This little town makes me sick. Nothing but gossip. 'They say'—'they say'—'they say,' but what do they really know? Just because a stranger comes here who doesn't believe in all our silly ways, who doesn't belong to our church, and who doesn't do as we do—because he's handsome and laughs and jokes—they say he's sinful. I tell you he isn't. What if he does dig for money? Is that wrong?" Turning on Frank, she cried hysterically, "What do you know about him?"

Her agitation sobered him, but he stood his ground.

"I know plenty. Already he's got money from people here under the false pretence that he can find buried treasures, and he's taken it from folks who could ill afford to lose it. His reputation is bad in the country he comes from. Ask anybody from Palmyra about Joe Smith and they'll tell you he's a swindling scoundrel. Him and his peek-stone! Did he ever find anything? His good looks and his glib tongue and his laughin' way with the women deceive innocent folks." He finished exhaustedly: "You asked me what I know and I've told you, but the worst thing he's done has been to you, Emma."

There was a moment of silence before Mrs. Hale asked hesitatingly, "And if you believe all the things they say to be true, Frank, would you still want to marry Emma tomorrow?"

"Yes, of course," he answered simply.

Emma, in a last effort at defence, protested, "But they aren't true, so why should he believe them?"

Frank looked at her reproachfully. "You shouldn't say that, Emma. You know they are true."

"Why do you say that?" Her voice was scarcely audible.

"Because I, too, was on Wilderness Hill last night."

"You?"

"Yes, I followed you."

"But where were you?"

"Near enough to protect you if necessary. I followed you back to your own door this morning."

Emma glared at him in anger. Her lips were drawn into a thin white line, which trembled as she flung at him, "I don't thank you for that! A cowardly, sneaking thing to do—eavesdropping!"

"But, Emma——"

"Why didn't you speak . . . stop me . . . if you're so interested?"

"I didn't want to make a scene. When I was sure you were there, it was too late. Everybody would have known that it was you. I didn't follow you to expose you, but to protect you if necessary. Can't you see, Emma, I'm not criticizing you.

Nothing you do makes any difference in the way I feel about you. I'll always love you whatever you do!"

All anger left the girl as an incredible wonder at such ardent devotion came over her. In that moment she was closer to him than she had ever been in the years she had known him. But when her mother, greatly moved, pleaded, "You will do as he wants, Emma, won't you?" she shook her head, almost regrettfully, saying, "I can't promise that . . . now."

Frank made one last plea, "You mean you won't—you've made up your mind?"

"I don't know."

Mrs. Hale went wearily to Frank and laid her hand tenderly on his shoulder. "Go, now, Frank," she begged. "Do not ask Emma for an answer to-day. Come back early in the morning."

Frank started obediently. As he reached the door, he turned and gave Emma one last imploring look, made as if to speak, then in despair walked out of the house.

Chapter Four

ON THE AFTERNOON OF THE SAME DAY, JOE SMITH LEANED INDO-lently against the trunk of a large beech tree, idly casting pebbles into the foaming spray of the turbulent rapids below Cascade Falls. The avalanche of pounding water, dropping from a ledge some sixty feet above, shot down in one steady, unbroken sheet of foam and leaping over large boulders sped away into the sinuous Cascade Creek, which joined the Susquehanna just below Wilderness Hill. The force of the falling water had worn away the cliffs of horizontal rock strata until a large, circular glen had been formed. High above the glen, beetling crags jutting out from the precipitous cliffs were crowned with lofty columns of old forest trees—beech and hemlock-spruce—which arched across the ravine in the form of a vault, well-nigh shutting out the sky. Joe had discovered this secluded spot on one of his numerous tramps in search of strategic points for his digging enterprises. At this hour the late afternoon sun filtered palely through the budding branches of the trees, but the glen below was chill and damp.

The remarkable stature and massive physique of the young man of about twenty instantly attracted attention. His huge, raw-boned figure, well over six feet in height, although as yet scarcely settled into the harmonious proportions of maturity, was imposing in a leonine way. Without subtlety or refinement, the features of his face were nevertheless strikingly handsome, and from them one might surmise something of the character they undoubtedly implied. The aquiline nose suggested intractable pride; the chin, petulant wilfulness; the full lips of the somewhat crooked mouth, sensuousness and arrogance; and the uncertain greenish-blue eyes, an impetuous and restless nature. But the whole of these characteristics was more than a summary of the individual parts. There was about the general appearance of his face a Byronic quality—flamboyant, imaginative, adventuresome, proud, scornful—at once attractive and repellent. He was carelessly clad in a dark, shabby suit, his trousers thrust into worn boots; a crumpled slouch hat, brown and rusty from long use, insolently cocked to one side of his large head; a blue calico shirt open at the throat, exposing a strong, weathered chest. In spite of the rustic appearance of his dress, there was a certain clean, hearty grace in the long and sturdy lines of his body.

Although there was no impatience in his manner, nothing to suggest an undue eagerness, he occasionally turned away from the falls and raised his head as if listening. As he resumed the pastime with the pebbles, thoughts of his money-digging enter-

prises drifted through his mind with the same easy nonchalance as there was in the movements of his large arms. He remembered the fifty dollars Josiah Buck had reluctantly given him that morning and chuckled, picturing to himself the greedy light this would bring to his mother's face. Recalling his talk with the dissatisfied Josiah, he spoke aloud in an insolent, drawling voice, as if repeating what he had told him: "Could I help it if the Spirit wanted a black sheep instead of a dog? Was it my fault the girl screamed?" At the thought of Emma, his expression became more animated and he turned abruptly to look in the direction of Harmony, which was hidden around the bend of the stream about two miles distant. "Wonder what's happened to her? She oughta be here now—never late before. Pretty girl . . . got money . . . smart, too . . . wouldn't Ma have a fit if I brought home a bride . . ."

"Joe?"

"Here! All right!"

He sprang with the agility of a large cat down the uncertain banks of the stream. A few moments later he returned, Emma in his arms. He lifted her on to the rocky ledge, the only entrance to the glen, and leaped up quickly beside her. Flushed and breathless, she modestly arranged her dress and looked at him shyly, laughing:

"Why, you aren't out of breath at all! That steep place always scares me, but you climb it so easily. You lifted me without any trouble at all, just as if I didn't weigh anything."

"You don't," he boasted, proud of his great strength. In an instant he grasped her at the waist and lifted her high into the air as one holds up a child. He enjoyed her futile remonstrance and helpless struggles. "How pretty you are!" he exclaimed as his avid eyes examined her appraisingly.

She was dressed in a wadded pelisse of golden brown satin. Her high rolling collar, lined with a white lawn ruff, framed her young face demurely. Her tight bodice was fastened with gilt catches that snapped over round gilt buttons, and her brown velvet hat, an enormous scoop, almost surrounded the face lost in its depths. Her black hair escaped from below its brim and hung on either side of her head almost to her throat. Her costume was the last word in walking clothes from Philadelphia. Although it was not designed for mountain climbing, she could not resist the temptation to wear it and was instantly repaid by the ardent appreciation of Joe's glance. He lowered her to the ground, but before she could recover, took her into his arms. He paid no attention to her half-hearted protests, but kissed her eagerly and passionately until she finally subsided.

"Emma, you're late," he reproached her as he carried her over to a log and sat closely beside her.

"Yes, I had to slip away. I'm supposed to be at my music lesson. Mother has been watching me all day."

"Watching you?"

"Joe, she knows everything!"

"About us?"

"About last night. She was waiting up when I got home. She hadn't been to bed all night."

Oblivious of the concern in her voice, he demanded bluntly, "Well, what did she say?"

Emma hesitated. "She didn't like it. She was worried—dreadfully worried, Joe."

"What did your father say?"

"Oh, he doesn't know."

"Well, he will, soon enough." Joe threw back his head defiantly and with a careless laugh. A look of fright passed over Emma's face.

"Oh, no! He mustn't!"

"Mustn't? What do you mean? You promised."

"I know, Joe, but do you think we should?"

"Do you want to go on living in this little village? There's nothing for you here. You don't like it. I'll show you how to live!"

"But I'm afraid of father."

"Why is he so opposed to me? I haven't done him any wrong."

Confused and loath to hurt him, she replied haltingly, "You're so different, Joe, from the folks around here. They don't understand you. They're ignorant. They haven't been anywhere. Why, most of them haven't even been to Philadelphia."

"But you've been, haven't you?" he asked shrewdly.

"Yes. I went to Miss Crane's seminary for a year," she admitted with modest pride. "And, of course, you've been everywhere."

"You're smart, Emma," he said almost enviously. "You write and have read a lot of books."

"But, Joe, not half so smart as you. I've never known anyone like you before. Your life's been so exciting, so adventurous! My little life seems dull beside yours. The people in Harmony are just plain jealous because you can do so much and are so different!"

The wondering admiration in her eyes pleased him and he spoke with truculent pride: "Well, what's wrong with that? Is it a sin to be different?"

"But don't you see? Father is a Presbyterian. He's very strict. It isn't you. It's the way you make your living . . ." She paused in embarrassment.

"Oh, you mean my profession. This?"

He took the peek-stone from his pocket and held it before her fascinated eyes. She drew back startled, staring at it with awe and incredulity.

"Do you really see things in the stone?"

"Of course. I see wonderful pictures from all over the world, buried treasures hidden in the earth by pirates and smugglers, monstrous fierce animals in India and Africa, and marvellous visions from Heaven. Why, I see everything. Don't you believe?"

"Yes . . . I think so . . . But father says . . ." She hesitated, then with sudden courage, "Father says that all divining and peeking is of the devil."

A flash of resentment shot from his narrowed eyes, but, quickly controlling himself, he answered with canny assurance, "Your father hasn't faith enough. Weren't there miracles in the Bible? Didn't St. Paul have visions?"

"But mother says you're a disbeliever—an atheist—that you don't believe in God. That isn't true, is it?"

"Of course not. I believe all your folks do, and more too. The trouble with your father is that he doesn't believe enough." Sensing the young girl's growing relief, he elaborated, "Is there any reason we shouldn't have prophets to-day? 'O ye of little faith'—that means your father. It's men like him that prevent the spread of the Lord's latest revelations."

"But this stone, Joe? Where did you get it?"

"I found it on a hill. The Lord led me to it—it is a gift from God. Through it He reveals Himself to me—tells me what to do. When I'm in doubt I just look into the stone and God speaks to me."

"Look now! Tell me what you see!"

"Do you really want me to? Remember, when the stone reveals, it's dangerous not to do what it commands—it might strike you dead! Do you want me to look?"

She regarded the stone fearfully for a moment, then, overcome with curiosity, replied, "Yes."

Instantly he was metamorphosed. His easy, careless manner fell from him like a cloak as he took on the rapt expression of a seer. Motioning her to a place in front of him, he knelt and placed the stone in his battered hat, which he closed over his face. He peered long and intently, muttering strange words unintelligible to the wide-eyed girl. His body swayed slightly with the rhythm of his voice. He appeared to have lost all consciousness of her presence. After what seemed an eternity, words which Emma could understand came from his lips:

"I see a girl standing between two men—dark shadows surround one man—a blinding light falls on the other one—

the girl looks first to one and then to the other—she is pulled towards the shadows, and down, down into a pit—now the light draws her back—she rises on a cloud surrounded with glory—the man in the shadows is evil—he threatens the girl—denounces her. The other——”

“Stop! Don’t tell me any more!” Emma, kneeling close to the gazer, leaned forward excitedly and clutched his arm frantically.

Joe shook his head as if throwing off a hypnosis and turned to the girl hysterical with fear. She clung to him desperately. Almost in tears, she begged, “Don’t do that again. That was Frank you saw. . . .”

“Frank? Who’s Frank?” Joe stood up, watching her curiously and suspiciously.

“Frank Fetter—the man who wants to marry me.”

“Why haven’t you told me before?” His voice was stern, commanding.

“I’ve tried to . . . I was afraid. . . . It’s all so terrible.”

“What do you mean?”

“He knows all about us . . . about last night. He was there and came to the house this morning and told mother.”

“Well, what of it? What’s he going to do about it?”

“He wants me to marry him—to-morrow. He’ll tell father everything if I don’t, and if father finds out, he might kill you. Oh, Joe, I think you’d better go away.”

“Like hell I will! I don’t run away from any man. Besides, you belong to me, and when I go, you go with me.” He took her roughly by the shoulders. “Look here, Emma, we’re going to get married. I need you and you need me.”

“But, Joe, I spoiled everything. I didn’t mean to—I was afraid.”

“The Lord works in strange ways to reveal His will. As soon as you screamed I knew that I had been brought to Harmony to find you—to make you my wife. And the stone has to-day proved it. You will come with me, won’t you, Emma?”

Under the spell of his dominance she nodded silently.

“Then there’s just one thing to do. We must go to your father right away.”

“Joe . . .” She spoke uncertainly, the words coming with great difficulty. “I must ask you something. It’s about what father said this morning.”

“Something more? Well, ask it. Ask anything. There are no secrets in my life.”

“Father said that you are not honourable about women—that you have wronged Jenny Vale.” As he raised his head, flushed with resentment, Emma went on quickly, “Don’t be angry, Joe. I know it isn’t true, but I am telling you because father believes

it, and he says that's an unpardonable sin. I'm so afraid of what he might do to you if . . . ”

“It's a damned lie. Just a lot of small town gossip. A fellow can't say 'How do you do' to a girl without a lot of evil-minded scoundalmongers spreading lies about him. I've tried to be nice to the women in this town; I've made myself pleasant; but small thanks I get for it!”

“Oh, Joe, you mustn't talk like that. The girls have been crazy about you,” she said soothingly. “But father is so old-fashioned——”

“Look here, Emma, I'm going to get you out of this town. I'm going to see your father to-night.” His eyes were almost closed as his thoughts quickly took shape. Accenting his words with the pressure of his hands on her shoulders, he leaned close to her as he gave definite instructions:

“You go home now. There's no time to be wasted. I'll wait here until you're back in the village so that no one sees us. Don't tell anyone you've seen me or that I'm coming to-night after supper to have a talk with your father.”

“But he won't listen to you.”

“Never mind. I've never found a man yet I couldn't talk to. I'll make your father hear me.”

“What if he refuses?”

“He won't.”

Emma was as thrilled by his courage and determination as by the glamorous life he lived. She wanted to believe that he was right, and, in spite of misgivings, acceded to his plan. He kissed her passionately; when she would have clung to him, he playfully picked her up and carried her to the doorway of their secret place. He lifted her over the ledge, hurried her on her way along the bank of the creek, and stood watching her until the bobbing plumes on her bonnet disappeared around the curve of Wilderness Hill. The look of frank desire on his face gave way to one of resolution and assurance, then abruptly to one of diffidence, as, with a shrug of his broad shoulders, he returned to the beech tree and again began tossing pebbles into the foaming rapids below Cascade Falls.

Chapter Five

A GREY DUSK HAD FALLEN OVER HARMONY, MELLOWING THE sharp angles and rigorous contours of the stiff little houses, which in the brilliant morning sunlight had seemed to parade up the broad street like a double column of disciplined soldiers, but which now appeared in the soft light like sleeping figures relaxed from the tension of diurnal responsibilities. Joe sauntered along the road leading to the Hale home. He had slipped quietly away from his companions at Mrs. Brewster's boarding house immediately after supper. A casual observer would not have thought him an eager suitor for the "catch" of the village. He had changed his shirt and hastily attempted to bring order into his chaotic mass of auburn hair, but as he climbed the hill with a long, nonchalant stride, whistling "The Merry Swiss Girl," he appeared unburdened with momentous matters.

But Joe was not unaware of the important objectives which brought him to the Hale home this evening. The house—its squareness, its heavy durability, its dignity emphasized in the grey atmosphere of late twilight—epitomized qualities Joe had dreamed of but never known in his native village of Palmyra. He had eyed the house covetously many times during his sojourn in Harmony. He had listened to stories of its inner magnificence and famous hospitality, for whatever Mr. Hale's austerity in moral and religious matters, he did not stint himself in the social life of his community. It was here that the villagers gathered after the corn-shuckings, wood-choppings, quiltings, and apple-peelings, not to mention the many purely frivolous entertainments constituting the intimate social life of Harmony. Emma's interest for Joe had been augmented by the fact that she lived in the fine house on the hill and would one day become its sole possessor. It irked his pride that he had been barred from entry to this village show-place, and his curiosity about it had doubtless been partially responsible for his original interest in Emma.

He had first met her in the home of one of her intimates. She had been immediately interested in his treasure digging, and he had sensed at once the difference in her from all the other girls he had ever known. She was attractive, but, more than that, she was educated and he respected "book learning" because he recognized its usefulness. Although he had never been to school himself, he was possessed by a consuming passion to raise himself above the social level into which he had been born.

At first he had not dared—not even he, Joe Smith—to dream of marriage with Emma Hale, whose position in Harmony had placed her outside the common life of the village. But last night's

events had so played into his hands that marriage now seemed easy—inevitable. He had learned from the villagers of her expected marriage with Frank Fetter, but, until to-day, had given the matter no grave thought. A vagabond by nature and congenitally opposed to “settling down,” he had not played seriously with the idea of marriage until last night, when events seemed a providential lead in that direction. He knew well the stern, rigid customs of the village. Not even the reputation of Emma Hale could weather the shock of her having spent the night with a group of men on the Hill.

After all, she had brought the thing on herself. He had felt a shock of surprise and some consternation when, in the midst of the ritual, she had cried out. His detaining her after the others had gone had been impulsive. It was only in the broad light of day and of consequent events that he realized the advantage of that point and acted upon it. The girl was infatuated with him. He held over her, not only the mysterious power of his necromancy, but her part in the failure of last night’s digging. She was his for certain, and when she became Mrs. Joe Smith this house would be his too. There he would establish himself with power and glory in the community. There he would amount to something—command the respect and reverence for which his ego burned.

As he climbed the steep approach to the house, Joe threw back his head to survey the mansion with an assured possessive air. He walked boldly up the broad stone steps, lifted the brass knocker, and unhesitatingly let it fall. . . .

Inside, the Hales sat at the dining-table concluding their supper. The habitual silence of the meal hour, intensified by the happenings of the day, was broken rudely by the commanding sound on the door. The Hales looked at one another, Mr. and Mrs. Hale in questioning surprise, Emma in alarm.

Mrs. Hale rose from the table, picked up a candle from the sideboard, and went to the front door. In a moment she returned, pale and excited.

“Someone to see you, father.”

“At this hour! Who is it?”

“It’s . . . Mr. Smith.”

“Smith? You mean Joe Smith?”

“Yes.”

“What’s he doing here? What does he want with me?”

“I don’t know. I—I didn’t ask. He wants to talk with you. I took him in there.” She nodded in the direction of the sliding doors which separated the dining-room from the parlour.

In the front room the two men faced each other with appraising eyes. Undisturbed by the frigid formality and starched dignity of Mr. Hale’s curt “Good evening, Mr. Smith,” Joe stepped

forward affably with an extended hand. Mr. Hale, ignoring the gesture, spoke abruptly:

“You wish to see me, sir?”

Joe betrayed no resentment at Hale’s slight. “Yes, I’d like to have a talk with you if you can spare the time.”

“What is it you want?”

“May I sit down?”

He motioned him to a chair. Joe seated himself comfortably as Mr. Hale sat rigidly upright on the edge of a sofa as far distant from his caller as the dimensions of the room permitted.

“Been wantin’ to meet you for some time, Mr. Hale,” Joe began in a leisurely fashion. “Heard a great deal about you since I came to Harmony.”

“And I’ve heard a good deal about you, Mr. Smith.” Hale spoke pointedly.

“Yes, time we met and got acquainted.”

“I haven’t many moments to spare, young man. You say you have business with me?” Mr. Hale did not hide his growing annoyance.

“Well . . . yes, I think you might call it business.”

“Look here, Mr. Smith, you’d better come to the point at once. If you’ve come to complain because I told Josiah Buck he had to stop this peeking business, just say so and we’ll know where we stand.”

A flash of surprise, then anger, shot across Joe’s face, but his voice did not lose its suavity.

“Josiah? Didn’t hear about that. Just what have you got against me, Mr. Hale?”

“Since you ask me, I don’t mind telling you that I think you’re an unreliable fellow—a menace to our community.”

“That’s what you told Josiah?”

“I told him that and a good deal more. I told him that you’re a destructive influence—that you pollute the morals of our people by luring them away from Christian principles—that you’re carrying on nefarious practices of the devil and that this community is going to drive you out if you don’t go of your own free will—that already there are many bent on violence. There are other charges of a far more serious nature which I don’t care to mention now.” Hale shook his finger at the man and his voice rose to thundering volume.

Joe retained an outward composure. Studying Hale quizzically, he asked, “What do you mean to insinuate? Wouldn’t it be better to tell me what you’re talking about?”

“You know what I mean. What kind of a fellow are you to prey upon the daughter of a defenceless widow—an innocent young girl infatuated with your nonsense—a girl who has no men-folk to defend her?”

Joe laughed enigmatically and then, irked, replied, "If you mean there's silly gossip about Jenny Vale and me, I tell you there's no truth in it. Surprised you listen to it. Besides, I didn't come to this town to beg for business. I came because I was invited by some of your best church members."

"You're going to be invited to leave, and a good beginning is to invite you to leave this house."

"Calm yourself, Mr. Hale. I'm accustomed to outbursts from unbelievers."

"Unbelievers! You mean in witchcraft."

"I mean in works of faith—trust in God's miracles."

Hale's face turned purple as he spluttered, "I won't listen to such talk. This is sacrilege!"

Joe with unctuous complacency coolly continued, "Mr. Hale, you're a rich man and an important man in your community—a leader in the Presbyterian Church. It grieves me to see how small your faith is in divine miracles. Did we not in Bible times have prophets, seers, revelators, healers of the sick? Why not to-day? 'If ye have faith even as a grain of mustard seed, ye can remove mountains.'"

"Did you come here to insult me—in my own house? What have you to do with God's powers? Digging for buried treasures! Pure witchcraft! Taking the hard-earned money of poor, misguided farmers! And what have they ever got in return?"

"They've got each according to his faith. I can tell you plenty of instances where with divine guidance I—"

"Nonsense. Lies . . . lies . . . lies—all of it!"

"I've healed the sick with the help of the Lord. There's the case of Liza McCord—"

"Pure hysterics!"

"O ye of little faith! I shall pray that you see the light, Mr. Hale."

Isaac Hale, at the end of his endurance, exploded, "I've had enough of your insults, sir. There's the door!" He rose wrathfully.

Joe got up slowly and stretched himself to his full height. He crossed the room until he stood within a few feet of Mr. Hale. The two men made a strange picture as they faced each other like two beasts, one ready to leap at the other's throat, the other wishing to be friendly, yet stiffly on defence. In the dim light of the flickering candles their tall figures cast grotesque shadows against the austere whiteness of the walls. Hale, although a large man, seemed small beside the giant who looked mockingly down at him. Joe gave a little characteristic shrug to break the tenseness.

"I'm going, Mr. Hale, but you haven't heard yet what I came for."

"By God's mercy, what did you come for?"

With the slight suggestion of a bow, Joe answered, "To ask your daughter's hand in marriage."

Hale staggered back incredulous. He looked at Joe as if he thought him out of his senses. Before he could speak, Joe went on quickly:

"I know this must be a surprise to you, Mr. Hale. I'm sorry you feel the way you do about me. But I forgive you because I know you don't understand me. Emma *does* understand and has promised to marry me."

"Emma? My daughter . . . marry you? You must be crazy!"

"Not crazy, but divinely led to Harmony to make her my wife. Won't you try to be fair, Mr. Hale, and consider your daughter's happiness?"

"Happiness—married to you?" Hale was dazed and stared at Joe as if struggling to comprehend the meaning of what he had said. "Does my daughter know you? Has she ever seen you?"

"Many times. I met her soon after I came to Harmony and we have seen each other daily."

"But how? Not here!" Hale stammered.

"Your feeling against me made that impossible. I had to meet her secretly."

"My God. . . . Is it possible? My daughter?"

"Why not, Mr. Hale? You can trust Emma to me. I'll provide her a good home."

"In Palmyra? In that log shack you live in with your crazy mother and father? I know about you and your worthless family." Mr. Hale had somewhat recovered from the paralysing shock of Joe's request for Emma. With mounting anger he advanced towards him, shaking his fist threateningly in Joe's face. "Now leave this house at once. Get out!"

Joe did not move, but questioned insolently: "Then you refuse your consent to our marriage?"

"I'd rather see my daughter dead than married to you. If you have bewitched her, I can only pray Almighty God to save her from such a scoundrel. Over my dead body will she leave this house." His voice, trembling and terrible with rage, rose to a thunderous shout as he pushed Joe towards the door with his final command, "Now, you iniquitous son of Satan, you defiler of women, get out of this house and out of this town or else suffer the consequences."

Joe turned contemptuously, shrugged his shoulders, and sauntered out of the Hale home. He was but a short distance down the path when he heard someone running towards him from the side of the house. It was Emma. She flung herself into his arms.

"Oh, Joe, I heard everything. I'm so sorry!"

"You heard?" He gave a faint whistle of surprise.

"Father was terribly unfair. What shall we do? They'll make me marry Frank now. I can't do that after . . ." She clung to him desperately.

The thought of losing her and the excitement of her body, warm and trembling in his arms, aroused him to determination.

"There's but one thing to do. We must go away. To-night."

"But, Joe, run away? I can't."

"There is no other way. You must. We can be married as soon as we cross into New York."

"It will break mother's heart."

"Well, do you want to marry Fetter?"

"No! Never!"

"Then we have no time to lose. Do exactly as I say. Go back into the house. Agree to anything they suggest. Say you'll marry Frank—say anything to quiet them. After they've gone to bed, when you're sure they're asleep, slip out and meet me at Cowley's Grove, there at the foot of the hill. I'll have horses waiting in three hours."

"You'll surely be there?"

"Without fail. Now hurry back before they miss you."

He kissed her. She turned and hurried into the house and crept up the stairs into her own room. She did not light the candle, but sat in the darkness, listening to the thumping of her heart and to the sound of her parents' voices below. She waited. It was not long until the thing she dreaded happened. The voices ceased. She heard her father's heavy step on the stair. Without knocking he opened the door of her room and stood there, a lighted candle in his hand. For a moment she forgot her own fears at sight of his face ravaged by the conflicting emotions of the last hour.

"Emma!" He spoke without anger, but with a terrible sternness and finality, more terrifying than anger could ever be. "Emma, your mother has told me of the great wrong you have done us. She has also told me that a good man, knowing your sin, is willing to take you as wife. You will marry him to-morrow and try to live down your sin by making him a faithful Christian wife. Pray God to forgive you, even as we forgive you."

Emma had risen when her father came into the room and stood holding the back of her chair for support. She did not utter a word, nor did her father expect it. After he had gone, she stood in the darkness, quivering with the hurt inflicted by his words. Then she flung herself across the bed and buried her face in the pillow to stifle the sound of bitter sobbing. . . .

Hours later, as the full opaque moon rose over Wilderness Hill, Emma stole quietly from the great stone house on the hill.

Chapter Six

IN THE LATE AFTERNOON OF THE FOLLOWING TUESDAY JOE AND his bride arrived at the Smith farmhouse. As he and Emma rode into the yard, two ragged unwashed children from ten to fifteen years of age came running out of the house.

"Joe! Joe!" they shouted as they leaped and cavorted like young animals.

Then they saw Emma. Perplexed by her presence, they stopped and stood staring at her stupidly and suspiciously. Shortly the rest of the family joined them—Joe's two older brothers, Hyram and William, nondescript fellows; Pa Smith, a wizened little old man; Ma Smith, a thin, ailing woman with high-strung nerves and unsteady, feverish eyes.

Emma was embarrassed by the circle of peering eyes which mercilessly examined every detail of her person. True, she did not look her best. She had started on the elopement clad in her new riding habit—a birthday gift from her father, who had purchased it on one of his numerous buying trips to Philadelphia. The blue cloth with a dark velvet collar, topped by a round beaver cap and a long red plume, had fashioned her into a picture of delight of which she was not unaware. But the three-day journey on horseback over the muddy spring roads brought her to the Smiths in a sad state of exhaustion and dishevelment. When she and Joe had stopped for rest and repair in Palmyra, the nearest village to the farm, she had begged him to send warning to his family, but he had refused.

"They don't need to be told. There's lots of room for us out there, and besides, I want to surprise the folks. Gee! I can see Ma's face now when I introduce my bride." He laughed boisterously, as if he were about to play a practical joke on the family.

Now, as the Smiths, curiously gaping, stood waiting for an explanation, Joe grandiloquently announced, "My wife!"

For once Ma Smith was momentarily speechless. "Joe, you're crazy!" she finally exclaimed, in a high-pitched, hysterical voice. Then, as the truth of the apparently unwelcome news overcame her incredulity, she turned brusquely to recognize Emma with a cold, accusing stare, while the younger Smiths broke into gleeful shouts.

"Hey, Joe's married!"

"Where'd ya get her, Joe?"

They jumped about her excitedly, pulling at her habit, snatching at the plume of her hat, pointing curiously at the Nelson's balls which buttoned her jacket. To them she was as great a curiosity as they were to her. As they continued to paw her

with their dirty hands, she turned to Joe imploringly, but was puzzled to see on his face an expression of proud approval. Ignoring her, he continued to talk animatedly to his mother, who listened avidly to every word. He had taken from his belt the money so zealously guarded throughout the trip and was dangling it before her eyes. When the old lady's claw-like hands reached out for it, he teasingly held it from her reach and then complacently fastened it securely in his belt again. After a while Pa Smith timidly pushed the youngsters aside and approached Emma.

“We’re mighty pleased to have you for our daughter, Miss. Won’t you come into the house?”

As they started towards the cabin, Emma’s perplexities gave way to complete bewilderment. When she had asked Joe in the glen by Cascade Falls about his home, he had told her that it was a large comfortable farmhouse. His manner, more than his words, suggested a white frame structure, clean and dignified, like those in Harmony, and set in a grove of spruce and beech trees. What she saw was a ramshackle, slab shack, incongruously devised and shoddily constructed, its broken windows patched with worn-out clothes and fragments of paper and blankets. Near the house stood a clay oven, and, beyond that, a small shed for the pigs, which was scarcely less habitable than the house itself. Scattered about the half-cleared yard lay broken jars and pots, rickety wagons, rotten stumps, and twisted branches of mutilated trees. Just in front of the house, a charred and blackened giant pine raised aloft two burned arms as if to curse its brutal enemies. Emma could not believe this to be Joe’s home—the place where they were to live. In Harmony no farmer would have put tenants in such a shack. It must all be an evil dream.

The nightmare continued as she started into the house. Ma Smith excitedly stopped her just in front of the door.

“No! No! You mustn’t that way! Abraham,” she turned to one of the younger children, “get the broom.” Emma stood in amazement as Ma Smith took the broom and, holding it horizontally across the doorway, commanded her to step over. “It’s bad luck,” she explained, “for a bride to enter her new home otherwise.”

Emma at first could not believe that Ma Smith was not joking, and she began to laugh, but a stern glance from the old woman informed her of the seriousness of the matter. Just as Emma raised her foot to step over the broom, Ma Smith, in her excitement, dropped it.

“Oh! That’s a sure sign of bad luck! What shall we do?”

“If she turns around three times and throws the broom over

her left shoulder, the evil spirit 'll be driven away," Pa Smith suggested timidly.

Emma did as she was bade and at last found herself in the front room, which apparently served the Smiths as parlour, dining-room, and sleeping quarters. Crude pieces of home-made furniture, their broken joints inadequately bandaged, were thrown about haphazardly. Two rickety unmade beds stood along the farthest wall. Soiled clothes were heaped on chairs and filled dark corners. Unwashed dishes were piled on an oilcloth-covered table. Odds and ends of household articles cluttered another table, on one end of which Emma noticed mutilated copies of the Bible and the *Adventures of Captain Kidd*. To add to her confusion, Joe seemed to find nothing amiss. If aware of her perplexity, he ignored it as he continued his excited conversation with his mother. Pa Smith selected the least rickety of the chairs, brushed the clothes to the floor, and, dusting the seat with his sleeve, rather ruefully invited her to be seated. . . .

Confused and dejected, Emma somehow lived through the bewildering events of the afternoon, and through the evening meal. She did not want to eat, but when Ma Smith urged her, it seemed difficult to refuse. There was something about the authoritative manner of the old woman that frightened her. From the first moment of her arrival, Emma knew unmistakably that Joe's mother resented her entrance into the family, but she soon discovered that it was not so much a resentment directed against her personally as a fear that she might impede Joe's rise to predestined power. The nature of this fear became clear during the evening as the family sat about Ma Smith, who, having reconciled herself to the inevitable, instructed Emma in the history and traditions of the Smith clan :

"There's some things you ought to know about our family now that you've become a member. Has Joe told you of your responsibilities?"

"Well . . . I hope I understand what it means to be Joe's wife," Emma answered with embarrassment.

"Joe, have you told Emma of your divine destiny?"

"No, Ma, I left that to you. I knew you'd do it better than I could. I'll go out and look after the horses while you tell her."

"Divine destiny? Why, Joe . . ." Emma turned to him perplexed as he started for the door.

"Ma 'll explain it all," he broke in quickly and left the house.

"Abraham, you kids be quiet! Pap, make the children behave while I explain some things to Joe's wife." The Smiths settled into a circle of intent listeners as Ma Smith bent her darting gaze upon Emma and spoke as if she were instructing a child. "You have married a man with the mark of God upon him.

Joe is the seventh son of a seventh son! That alone shows divine favour." Then Ma Smith's voice sunk to an awed whisper as she added, "He was born with the caul!"

"The caul? I'm sorry, but I don't understand." The little Smiths laughed knowingly at Emma's ignorance, but Ma Smith silenced them with a stern look.

"The caul, my child, is the Lord's mark upon his chosen. Any baby born with the caul is destined to greatness."

Emma was still perplexed but too embarrassed to expose her ignorance further. "I'm sure Joe will be a great man. He talks so well, I'd think he would make a fine lawyer."

"Lawyer! God's chosen a lawyer?"

"I see, daughter," Pa Smith put in mildly, "that Joe hasn't told you the important thing. Ma, you'd better tell her about the vision."

"Yes, yes, Ma, the vision. Tell us about the vision!" the young Smiths exclaimed, then grew quiet as they listened eagerly to the now familiar story.

"At the time I was carrying Joe," Ma Smith began, "I suffered a terrible fever, which the physician pronounced to be fatal. I continued to grow weaker until I could endure no sound above a whisper. I dreaded to think of death because I knew I was not ready to meet my Christ face to face. In the midst of my despair a vision came to me. I saw a dark and abysmal chasm between me and my Saviour. As I strained my eyes, I could discern a faint light glimmering through the gloom. I looked to the Lord and begged Him to spare my life in order that I might bring my child into the world.

"Shortly after this a voice spoke to me: 'Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' Then a great light shone into the room and I beheld a little boy-child seated on a golden throne. I saw his face plain. It was just the way Joe looked six years later. The child was surrounded by twelve angels and all about them was a halo of magnificence. Vast multitudes surrounded the throne. They fell on their knees and worshipped at the feet of the child. While I watched, I felt a hand on my shoulder and a voice spoke to me out of a cloud: 'Behold thy son, a new Prophet. He shall save the world from its sins!'"

She paused to survey Emma triumphantly. The girl felt called upon to speak. "That was a remarkable dream, wasn't it?"

"Dream! That was no dream. It was the voice of God!"

William, the eldest son, aware of the incredulous expression on Emma's face, felt it necessary to reassure her. "Ma's got second sight, you know. She sees things ordinary folks can't. It was a real vision, all right, and Ma's had a lot more. There's no doubt about that."

"Yep, daughter," Pa Smith corroborated, "you know Joe was born on Christmas Day. That's a sure indication he was meant for some high purpose."

The Prophet entered the room in time to hear this last. "I was a Christmas present for the Smith family, all right, Emma; did they tell you what Ma christened me?"

"Why—Joseph . . ."

Ma Smith interrupted her and turned to the children: "Abraham! Samuel! Tell Emma your brother's full Christian name."

In unison they chanted, with great gusto, "Joseph Ezekiel Isaiah Jeremiah Smith, the Prophet."

"Amen!" Pa Smith solemnly affirmed.

"But, Joe, you should have told me." Emma was breathless with shock and wonder. "I never knew . . ."

"Tell her about grandpa, Joe," Abraham shouted.

"And about Uncle Jason and Aunt Sophie," Samuel chimed in.

Little by little, as the Smiths urged each other on, Emma learned the fantastic history of this strange family. It was the history of religious zealots whose miraculous experiences had subjected them to the scorn and persecution of every community in which they had lived. There was Uncle Jason who had tramped the hills of Vermont searching for Captain Kidd's buried treasure and who had become implicated by jealous neighbours with a certain John Whittaker for counterfeiting money. By turning witness for the state he had escaped prosecution. Uncle Jason, as a result of a nervous disorder, carried his head at a slight angle and was dubbed "Crooked-neck Jason," and, because he was continually shifting his church allegiance, it was said that "his religion was as crooked as his neck."

Then there was Grandpa Mack, an itinerant peddler, who had lived on to the ripe old age of seventy-five, when a great religious awakening overtook him. He saw strange lights and heard dim voices, and God gave him a vision of a new religion. Although suffering from epilepsy, he rode about the country selling tracts of his own writings in which he set forth the history of this spiritual rebirth.

Amos Jessup, one of Ma Smith's brothers, before he was sixteen had joined the Shakers, a church founded by one Anna Lee in 1714. This "Elect Lady," as she was called, had given her devotees a new Bible and was able to speak seventy-two tongues. She had often conversed with the dead in a language unknown to earthly mortals. She consecrated shivering, swooning, and falling down as acts of acceptable devotion. The Shakers held all goods in common, considered marriage a sin of the flesh, and forbade all sexual intercourse.

One of Ma Smith's sisters had had a miraculous recovery after years of invalidism. True, she was "borne away to the world of spirits" within a few months of her recovery, but she often sent back messages of her talks with the Virgin Mary, who, she said, "was very beautiful and always dressed in blue satin."

Pa Smith was completely dominated by his wife's religious experiences. He had followed her from Presbyterianism to Methodism to Universalism to Spiritualism to Seeking to Second-Sighting to Divine Healing. Although unable to read or write, he, like his wife, could see much and was the recipient of many gratifying revelations.

His visions, however, were of a more mundane nature than those of his wife, and were in part motivated by certain beliefs characteristic of the times. Fantastic legends haunted the peace and stimulated the already avid cupidity of the settlers in the Seaboard States. Strange curious stories of treasures buried by buccaneers, weird tales of large sums of money secreted by the fearful populace during the numerous wars, constituted much of the gossip of the countryside. So firmly did these beliefs fasten on the imagination of the people that there rapidly developed among the wild, unstable population a new class known as "Money Diggers." Emma had often heard her father inveigh against these nomads, passing from village to village, remaining nowhere long and digging wherever rumour indicated success. Their families followed them, and their children grew up untaught, untrained, unfriended, knowing little of the comforts and decencies of society, but inured to hardship, hunger, and poverty.

Pa Smith believed implicitly in this legendary lore of New England. With the exception of the Bible, the *Adventures of Captain Kidd* was the one book he knew, and to-night, as on many previous nights, Ma Smith read to the excited group a chapter from the thrilling and hazardous exploits of the famous buccaneer. When she finished, the little Smiths burst into exuberant exclamations of approval:

"We play pirate in the caves by Shady Creek!" Samuel explained to Emma.

"And are you Captain Kidd?" Emma asked.

"Oh, no, Joe's always Captain, but he don't play with us so much any more as he used to. He's too busy now."

"I'll play with you some time if you like," Emma offered.

The boys looked dubious about the possibility of a woman's taking part in such serious and masculine business, and the conversation gradually drifted to the subject of divination for buried treasure. Emma's mind could scarcely comprehend the curious stories related by these people, who, like their Irish progenitors, believed in fairies, ghosts, witches, and hobgoblins

—a belief which, for professional reasons, had lately found expression in celestial visions, faith cures, and money digging. At first Joe and his brothers had hired out as well-diggers. Like many others at this time they used a forked hazel switch or divining rod to locate underground streams of water. Later Joe had discovered his peek-stone, and the family had enlarged their digging enterprises to include the telling of fortunes and the recovery of lost and hidden treasures. They could discover the exact spot beneath which lay kegs, barrels, and hogsheads of gold and silver in the shape of coin, bars, images, watches, candlesticks, and the like. Joe declared that the hills about their community were constructed by human hands and that his peek-stone revealed beneath them great caverns filled with untold wealth. . . .

Emma, exhausted, perplexed, confused by these tales of marvel and wonder, said little. She was strangely depressed and longed for seclusion with Joe. Surely when they were alone he would explain everything to her, and perhaps then she could adjust herself to ways so different from those she had known in the great stone house in Harmony. But when the time came to retire, she was driven to remonstrance on discovering that she and Joe were expected to sleep in the front room with the two younger children.

"No, no, Mrs. Smith, I couldn't do that!" Close to tears, she resisted the intimidation of the old woman's accusing eyes. "You see, I'm very tired and I'm used to a room alone. Haven't you just a little room?"

"Well, of course, we may not be as fine as you're used to, but it's good enough for Joe . . ."

"I don't wish to trouble you, Mrs. Smith," she said apologetically, then turned to Joe. "Can't we go to Palmyra to-night?"

Thus appealed to, Joe came into the situation, saying flipantly, "Come, now, Ma, haven't you got the bridal suite ready? You oughta know we can't sleep in the same room as the kids. Weren't you ever young once?"

With Joe's insistence, Ma Smith reluctantly gave them her attic room—the only room with any privacy in the house. There Emma went alone as Joe remained below to talk with the family. She undressed and crept into the shaky bed, yearning for the oblivion of sleep. Instead, she lay rigid, staring wide-eyed into the darkness. Later, when Joe came whistling into the room, she turned towards him, expecting him to say something to break the horrible spell. Instead, he called out jauntily, "What? Not asleep yet?"

In that moment Emma knew that they were different—deeply, wholly, hopelessly different. Too exhausted to suffer more, she

lay wondering what would happen to her. When Joe had undressed and blown out the candle, a strange feeling swept over her. Under the protection of the darkness, the strain of the long evening gave way. She burst into weeping. No tears came, but her body shuddered with long racking sobs.

Joe was surprised and took her into his arms, holding her silently until the tears came and the sobs gradually subsided. Then, in a voice, rough but comforting, he spoke to her: "There, there, Emma, don't cry. We're not going to stay here long. Perhaps we'll go back to Harmony."

His manner was completely at variance with that of the Joe she had watched with the family downstairs. Even in her misery she noted this wonderingly. Here was the Joe she loved—for whom she had forsaken her home. His arms about her gave her warmth and security. Gradually the ugliness faded away. She was no longer afraid.

Chapter Seven

AT THIS TIME THE SMITHS BELONGED TO NO RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION. Scorned by the orthodox because of their fantastic visions and irregular habits—not to mention their alleged immoralities—they were not welcomed by the established churches. But Mrs. Smith was not one to keep her candle under a bushel. She had watched with shrewd interest the revival movements then sweeping the country. She had followed with intent curiosity the numerous Methodist camp-meetings exciting their own community. She had listened avidly to the exhortations of the circuit riders proclaiming the Day of Judgment, the doom of the wicked, the blessedness of the righteous. . . . She had seen hundreds of people, many of them scoffers, seized with terror, crying aloud to God for mercy, shrieking for salvation, leaping and rolling over benches, falling to the ground in trances, and succumbing to jerks that lasted for hours—even days.

And Mrs. Smith never forgot her own vision. She craved to publicize her religious experience, to establish her own band of devotees, and thus to fulfill the prophecy of Joe's Messiahship. Then, too, since her son's remarkable success with the peek-stone, she had been quick to recognize the wisdom of clothing his activities in a garb of sanctity.

It had become the custom for the Smiths to hold Sunday night religious meetings in their house. The fame of these meetings had spread throughout the surrounding district, and the inquisitive and credulous came for miles on foot or on horseback to listen and to give testimonies to the "powers" of the boy wonder.

On the first Sunday after Emma and Joe had come from Harmony, the meeting was particularly large. Word had gone out that Joe had brought home a rich bride from Pennsylvania, and the curious joined the devout on the road to the Smith house.

When the room was crowded, the meeting was opened by Mrs. Smith, who led in the singing of "Are You Washed in the Blood of the Lamb?" A thin, wiry little woman of fifty, her wispy, grey hair drawn into a tight knob on top of her head, she wailed out the words in a rasping voice as she accented the rhythm with her bony, rheumatic forefinger. The others joined in with varying degrees of accuracy and enthusiasm. When the song was finished, Ma Smith (as she was known to her family and intimate friends) lowered her head in meditation. Her thin, nervous lips moved as if she were communing with an unseen person. The others followed her example, and for a little space the crowded room was silent except for the unintelligible whis-

perings that came from the bowed figures. Presently Ma Smith's nasal voice was heard in solemn, plaintive tone:

"My dear brothers and sisters, this is an occasion for special rejoicing. We not only have Brother Joseph back in our midst, but he has brought with him a bride. Brother Joseph wants it known that he was divinely led in the selection of his wife. The Lord spoke to him through the marvellous stone. Let us all pray that Sister Emma will be worthy of the great honour which has fallen upon her in thus being allowed to serve as one of God's chosen."

Murmurs of "Amen" and "God make you worthy, Sister Emma," interrupted her discourse.

"Sister Emma has been serving God according to the imperfect light of the Presbyterians. But she is anxious to be instructed in the latest revelations."

"Amen!"

"God be praised!"

"O Lord, help Sister Emma!"

"We know that all of the present churches fall far short of the truth, and we have come together to declare the one and only true faith, as revealed to us through the visions of Brother Joseph."

"God bless Brother Joseph!"

"I see another stranger in our midst—a seeker, I know, after the True Faith. Let us do our part in leading him and Sister Emma to the light by telling our experiences with Brother Joseph's miraculous gifts."

"Yes! Yes!"

"Let us speak!"

"Amen!"

"Although he is my son, I make no claim on his powers. I was but the humble instrument selected by the Lord to bring him into the world. He belongs to you—to all men! Have faith in him and use his powers freely."

"Yes! Let us."

"God bless him!"

"And now come forward with your testimonies. Who will speak first?"

Joe had taken a chair to the little open space beside his mother and sat facing the east with the magic stone held in the upturned palms resting on his knees. Throughout the testimonials he lowered his gaze intently upon it, sitting immobile, like one in a trance. Each speaker in turn arose and made an obeisance in his direction. The first to begin was Joe's father, who, as if by routine, rose and with dramatic gestures spoke in the automatic sing-song of a tale oft repeated:

"When Brother Joseph was a small boy, I was once sick

nigh unto death of a strange fever. All the remedies had failed and I thought sure I'd die. Little Joseph came into my room. I saw a glow about his head. He laid holy hands upon me and said, 'Father, get well.' Instantly I went into a deep sleep and found myself in a beautiful garden which I thought was Heaven. On each side of the main walk there was a richly carved bench, and on each of the benches six carved images about the size of a man. As I approached, the first image on one side got up and bowed to me. Then I turned to the other side, and the first image there got up and bowed to me exactly as the other. So I went on, turning from left to right, until all twelve had bowed. When I awoke, the fever was gone and I was cured."

“Glory be!”

“Hallelujah!”

“Amen!”

Before the shouts of approval had died away, another man was on his feet eager to testify.

"I wanna tell about my cornfield. A heavy frost fell one night and threatened to destroy my crop. But Brother Joseph jist looked in his magic stone and blessed the field, and the next morning the frost was gone and didn't come back until I got everything shocked."

“Amen!”

“Praised be Brother Joseph!”

A third jumped up. "Brother Joseph did as much for me and more. When we moved on to our new farm, we couldn't find no water. We dug all over the place, seems like, but thar warn't no springs. Then we heard about Brother Joseph's powers. He come over with his divining rod and found water for us in no time. Ever since, we've been comin' here to these meetin's and bearin' testimony for Brother Joseph."

“Amen!”

“Praised be to the Lord!”

A little boy about twelve was the next to stand up. He spoke breathlessly, in a thin high-pitched voice, as if reciting a well-rehearsed piece.

"I want to testify for Brother Joseph. I lost my knife and it was gone for three weeks. Brother Joseph looked into the stone and told me I'd find the knife under the steps of the kitchen porch, and there it was."

“Amen!”

“Praised be!”

"The Lord bless the lad."

The spirited chorus of responses following the boy's speech was augmented by nods of approval as the zealots beamed upon their most youthful convert. A little hush of expectancy ran through the group when a middle-aged, appealingly attractive

woman rose to her feet. It was obvious that they expected something rare and awesome from this witness.

"Brother Joseph performed a miracle in our house. For fifteen years me and my man had prayed for a child, but I seemed to be a cursed and barren woman. I had taken herbs and consulted many midwives, but to no avail. Then we heard about Brother Joseph. My husband sent for him and he came to our house. He laid his stone on me in blessing and I conceived and brought forth a male child. Glory be to God and Brother Joseph!"

She sat down almost in a frenzy. Her ecstatic excitement communicated itself to the group and they burst forth into song:

God moves in mysterious ways
His wonders to perform.

During her testimony, her husband—the meek little man at her side—glowed proudly, adding his share of the "Amens" to the shouts that followed.

Other testimonials came rapidly, their tempo quickening as each speaker in turn sprang to his feet, scarcely allowing his predecessor to finish. The excitement mounted steadily until it reached a feverish climax in the final speech. The close, fetid room, lighted only by a few sputtering candles, cast vague grotesque shadows over the fanatical faces. Emma was reminded of the scene on Wilderness Hill.

There was, in the whole group, but one face which seemed quiet and natural. It was that of the stranger in the back of the room. He watched and listened closely, but his expression reflected none of the emotional contortions of the others. Emma wondered who he might be and why he was here. Once she had found his eyes watching her as if he were asking the same questions about her. She had been the first to look away.

Throughout the meeting Brother Joseph continued to sit apart with averted face, giving no sign that he was aware of the adulatory speeches regarding him. Now he arose and faced the group. He spoke in the round, sonorous, solemn tones reserved for ritualistic occasions.

"Brothers and sisters, looking into the stone, I have seen your testimonies being received at the throne of the Most High. Verily, dearly beloved, I say unto you that you are in His favour. You have found the one and only true way. Your faith has made you whole. No good thing will be withheld from those who believe. But remember, I am only the medium—the humble tool through which God works to aid you to find the road to glory.

"Hear my testimony that ye may tell others. When I was young and tender, a great desire to find the one true religion

came over me. I went from church to church and found it not, but instead was distracted by the war and tumult of conflicting opinions, and I came to the conclusion that there was not on earth the religion I sought. Confused, I fell into foolish errors, became a prey to the temptations of youth, and sinned grievously in the sight of the Lord.

“One day a voice commanded me, saying, ‘Go to the word of God for guidance.’ Compelled by this Higher Power, I opened the Bible, placed my finger on a verse, and read, ‘If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.’ Still puzzled, I retired to the woods to meditate on these words. In the beautiful, clear, spring sunshine, I uttered my first prayer. As I began speaking, a thick darkness covered me. In terror I called aloud to God for help. There descended upon me a pillar of light and in the air above, a voice said, ‘This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him.’ I inquired of the voice which church is right, and the answer came back, ‘All churches, all sects, are wrong. You must join none of them. You must go directly to God for the truth and you are chosen to reveal the truth you will be given. Into your hands is placed this symbol of power.’ Suddenly I felt a sharp blow on my forehead and I fell forward into the blinding pillar of light. When I recovered, this stone was in my hands.

“You have testified to the wonders it has worked. As I look into it to-night, I see signs of a great and wonderful new day. This day is near at hand. A quivering flood of light hovers over the magic spot in the woods where the Angel first appeared to me. It is too blinding to look long upon. I shall continue to watch and listen for the voice that spoke unto me.

“Look again upon this stone and pray. You have known its powers. He who looketh upon it in faith is blessed. But he who scoffs does so to his eternal damnation. Go ye forth and preach the glad tidings!”

He finished. A tremor ran through the group as they stared fixedly at the whitish, opaque stone shaped like the foot of a child. From the midst of the crowd a woman rose hastily, and, pushing aside those in her way, rushed to the seer, fell on her knees before him, and cried out wildly:

“I have faith. I will have faith. My child has been sick. It is dying. They told me about you, but I didn’t believe. Now I have seen and heard and do believe. Make my baby well!”

With the tears streaming down her face, she looked up at Joseph with tragic, pathetic eyes. He placed the stone upon her head, and, gazing into it intently, muttered some strange words. He then spoke to the woman.

“Your faith is now great. Continue to believe and your child will live.”

“Amen!”

“God grant His blessing!”

“God save the child!”

“God help you, Sister!”

“Glory be unto Joseph!”

The exclamations rose to an ecstatic fury as the people pressed forward around the kneeling woman, who, in gratitude, was kissing the boots of the Prophet. Then Ma Smith broke into song in which they all joined:

Oh, Jesus, wash us clean of sin.

The meeting was over. While Emma received the greetings of the neighbours, the mysterious stranger made his way forward to Joe. They talked quietly for a moment and then left the house together.

Soon Emma escaped to her little room. For hours she lay staring into the darkness, listening for her husband's return. When at last he crept carefully into the room, he did not light the candle, but undressed quietly and gently got into bed. She knew he did not wish to be questioned; she breathed regularly, pretending sleep. Long after he had lost consciousness, she lay awake trying to think order and reality into the confused events of the past week.

Chapter Eight

EMMA HAD LIVED WITH THE SMITHS SIX MONTHS. AS SHE WALKED along the country road one morning in early October, she reflected on this fact. Was it possible that only six months ago she had run away from her home to marry Joe? Was it such a very short time back that she had lived in the great stone house on the hill where all was clean, orderly, natural? Having just left the confused Babel of the Smith breakfast hour, she recalled wistfully the utter quiet and dignity of that same hour in the sunny dining-room of her own home. Fresh from the sickening picture of Ma Smith, unkempt and neurotic, of Pa Smith, forlorn and intimidated, she contrasted with a nostalgic ache the picture of her own parents—her mother, neat and calm; her father, austere, but sympathetic. She closed her eyes and for a moment felt herself safe and happy in Harmony again. But that feeling passed as the incubus of the last half-year again settled upon her.

She walked slowly and listlessly, breathing deeply of the dry, pungent, pollen-laden autumn air. Nature, so seldom considerate of the feelings of men, this day was strangely sympathetic to her mood. The dying vegetation along the dusty road and the maples, elms, hickories, and oaks in the near-by groves, in one last heroic gesture, flamed forth in an exotic brilliance of gold and red and bronze, at once beautiful and melancholy. A soft, persistent breeze blew fluffy clouds across a water-colour blue sky. Frequently Emma paused to rest. Her appearance had changed greatly during this brief half-year. She would scarcely have been recognized as the fresh-skinned, well-cared-for young girl who only last Easter had so adventurously stolen away on a midnight elopement. Her face was thin. A strained look about the mouth and eyes robbed her of her youthful charm. The buoyancy of her walk was gone. She seemed much older.

She had formed the habit of walking alone in order to escape the depressing chaos of the Smith household. When she had finished her part of the morning work, she was wont to evade Ma Smith's vigilant eyes—to escape the house before the older woman called her back. And now there was added reason for protecting herself from those prying eyes. . . .

Breakfast had become a ghastly dread for Emma. It took an heroic effort for her to remain at the table—to go through the pretence of eating—when every nerve in her cried out for escape into fresh air, sunshine, solitude. On these walks, her mind invariably rehearsed in minutest detail her life since the midnight hour when its easy flow had been abruptly deflected.

Try as she would to think on other things, she found the events of the six months ruthlessly pressing upon her mind.

And so on this warm, caressing October morning she began to remember. There was Joe waiting at Cowley's Grove with the horses (she had never learned how or where he had secured them); the hard ride in the darkness to Beaver Dam—just across the line into New York; the sunrise marriage with the village Justice of the Peace officiating; and the three hard days of weary travel to Palmyra.

Then the Smiths! She shuddered as she recalled her first meeting with the family. And the weird religious gatherings! She was shocked and not a little frightened by the wild, incredible manner in which these strange people worshipped God. Was this her husband's religion? Was this "the love of God," the "glory of His Kingdom," the "kindly, human spirit of His only begotten Son"? Was this the "faith, hope, and charity" she had so often heard preached from the pulpit of the little white church in Harmony? Recalling the solemn, austere services of her own church, she wondered if it were possible that she and Joe worshipped the same God.

There was no escaping her almost solitary confinement in the Smith house. Aside from the religious devotees they had few friends. At first she was at a loss to explain this almost complete social ostracism. Ma Smith talked incessantly about persecutions, and Emma only gradually understood the antagonism this strange family everywhere engendered. Gradually, from snatches of casual conversations overheard on her trips into Palmyra, from the family quarrels with unfriendly neighbours, from the bickerings between Ma Smith and the innumerable creditors besieging the house, and from an intuitive correction of the manifestly exaggerated stories told around the evening fireside, Emma formed quite another picture of the family from that given to her by Ma Smith.

She traced in her mind the history of the Smiths since the day Grandpa Mack had sailed from Galway in the early eighteenth century to seek his fortune in the Promised Land across the ocean. Instead of a land flowing with milk and honey, he had found the stony, forbidding Vermont countryside. Here, following the law of least resistance, drifting with his family from town to town, he had barely eked out an existence. Ma Smith's marriage to the meek and indolent Pa Smith had not bettered their circumstances. Unable to adjust themselves to the life of any community, they lived with careless disregard of social responsibilities. They were never considered "desirable" by enterprising neighbours, who looked upon them as an untrustworthy, illiterate, and irreligious clan, entirely destitute of moral character.

When their petty thievings and irresponsible borrowings engendered too much warmth in the local atmosphere, they would load their shabby possessions into a covered wagon some dark night and take the road to another hunting ground. Their congenital optimism and care-free capacity for adjustment to the meanest circumstances kept them cheerful throughout the trials of their wanderings.

Their peregrinations about New England brought them with the restive tide of western emigration to frontier New York about 1816, when Joe was ten years of age. At first they had settled in Palmyra—"out West," as the New England and sea-board people referred to it—where Pa Smith opened a "Cake and Beer Shop," in which customers could purchase gingerbread, pies, boiled eggs, root beer, and maple syrup. Although the store featured Ma Smith's painted oilcloth table runners, the venture did not prosper, and it became necessary for the boys to peddle cakes at the county fair.

Wearying of their precarious mercantile life and hounded by creditors who on several occasions had Pa Smith jailed for debt, the family established themselves on the farm they now occupied. With no legal right, save that of the law of occupancy, they built their shack on land belonging to absentee owners. Gradually the boys added to the log cabin until it took on the appearance of a crazy-quilt. They called themselves farmers, but in reality they did little farming, keeping themselves alive by hunting, fishing, moutching, water witching, and divining. Occasionally they added to their meagre income from the sale of brooms, cord wood, and maple syrup.

But here, as in other communities, their irregular habits and queer notions aroused the suspicion of the neighbours. That sheep disappeared, tools were stolen, clothes lines robbed, and gardens ravaged on the very night that the "shouting Smiths," as they were called, were digging for buried treasures only confirmed these suspicions.

Emma, young and inexperienced as she was, dimly perceived in this history of the Smith family an explanation for many of the apparent contradictions in Joe's nature. Poverty, struggle, degradation, added to the contempt of neighbours, had engendered a sense of inferiority that had seared itself into the proud and ambitious nature of the imaginative young man. Even as a boy he had tramped through the hills of western New York, dreaming dreams of opulence and power that as time went on became more real to him than the poverty and degradation of his actual life. If he played pirate with his brothers in the caves near Shady Creek, Joe was Captain Kidd, mighty, powerful, heroic, sailing the stormy seas in search of galleons laden with gold. If they played "war," Joe it was who rode a black charger

at the head of valiants ready to slaughter the enemy—to do or die for a Christian cause. If they played "magic," it was always Joe who performed prodigious feats of legerdemain: he could recover stolen articles; he could mesmerize his brothers; he could make the sun to stand still, warts to disappear, and witches to hide themselves in corn-fields to come forth at midnight to pester the "persecutors" of the Smith family.

As he grew older, he took refuge from the taunts of the townspeople in a condescending superiority. He learned to ignore their insults, to disdain the disdainful, to scorn the scornful, and to find the assurance his nature demanded in a vivid dramatization of his ego. Thus Joe, the "genus" of the family, as his indulgent father boasted, soon gained a reputation for being a queer fellow, unusually lazy and vagabondish, and much given to lying and the telling of wild, incredible stories of his own prowess. He was unable to relate the commonest occurrence of his daily life without pretentious embellishment and would expound the most palpable exaggerations and marvellous absurdities with the utmost gravity. He made a curious picture as he stood in the village store relating his miraculous experiences to the amused, tobacco-chewing villagers. His ragged and patched trousers held to his long body by suspenders made of sheeting, his dirty calico shirt, and his unkempt mass of ruddy hair escaping through the holes of a battered hat only emphasized the wild light suffusing his rapt face as he described mysteries beyond the ken of moral man.

Frequently he became boisterous at the impertinent heckling of his listeners and assumed an offensive bravado. Yet, in spite of his imaginative enthusiasm and constitutional opposition to work, the restless, wayward youth was good-natured, easy in his manner, mild and sober when not irritated, and a general favourite with the young women of the village.

Emma was instinctively aware of these contradictory qualities in Joe's nature, and she felt certain that had he not been so continuously impressed throughout his early childhood and adolescence by Ma Smith's fervent belief in his predestined divination, he might have lived a happy, normal life. As it was, he had early developed a megalomaniacal imagination with which he dramatized himself as a hero, charging his way through the ranks of the enemy; a diviner, skilled in the mysteries of the supernatural; a Prophet, leading the armies of Zion to victory, power, glory! . . .

As Emma sat by the road this October morning, she pieced the fragments of her confusion of the past six months into a pattern intelligible, if not comforting. She felt instinctively that she could understand Joe in these terms and that they alone explained her double life—days full of revulsion and confusion in

which she saw little of Joe, who was so often away on secret, mysterious trips, or who, when at home, was so carefully guarded by Ma Smith; and nights in which he came to her with a passionate understanding that made it possible for her to go on, to face another dawn. Through the days he seemed to avoid her—to dread meeting her questioning eyes—but under the cloak of darkness he was as she remembered him in their little glen by Cascade Falls. . . .

Reluctantly, Emma got up and started back towards the house. As she approached the cluttered yard, she saw Ma Smith coming to look for her. She stopped in the shade of a tree to study the approaching woman, whose rapid, nervous walk gave her the appearance of leaping from step to step. Although careless and indolent about her housework, Ma Smith possessed an enormous nervous energy which spent itself largely in pursuit of fantastic religious notions and in the promotion of Joe's career. She had a young body, but an old face. She was small, thin almost to emaciation. Her head was hatchet-shaped and her stringy grey hair too thin to soften its sharpness; her mouth was narrow, straight, and twitching; her eyes, a greenish-grey, alternated between a wild restlessness and a vacant stare; her hands, badly deformed by rheumatism, were like claws and always hot and agitated. Emma had come to dread the touch of those hands; her aversion for them had become such an obsession that she would go to any length to avoid them. And Ma Smith seemed always to be touching her. Even at this time, those feverish, agitated hands had come to symbolize Ma Smith in Emma's mind. Now her eyes fastened upon them as the woman stood before her.

"I've told you before, Emma, you shouldn't be walking these roads by yourself. If you feel you need a walk, take one of the boys with you."

"I'm not afraid. I like to be alone. I'm used to it."

"But it isn't safe. There are wolves in the woods, and besides it isn't seemly for you to be running away from the family."

"I don't mean to be unfriendly, Mrs. Smith."

"Now, Emma, you've been here six months. It's time you began to call me Ma—like the rest of the family. You don't have to put on airs here."

A look of pain spread over Emma's face as she said in a low voice, "I'm sorry if you think I do that."

"Come here, Emma, let's sit on this log. It's time we had a real friendly talk."

Mrs. Smith laid a fawning hand on the girl's arm. It was a gesture intended to be friendly and Emma was ashamed at her own withdrawal. She seated herself on the log as far from Mrs.

Smith as possible and tried hard not to show her distaste for the woman.

"Emma, I know you're homesick," the old woman began. "It's only natural. A young girl should be a little lonesome, but there are special reasons why you ought to be proud of your lot. You are one of God's chosen—married to a man who is a great prophet and who will be worshipped by multitudes in the near future. The Lord told me this before Joe was born. Do you realize what that means, Emma?"

Mrs. Smith's usually thin and whining voice had taken on with the question an intensity which increased as she continued. "Yours is not an ordinary marriage. Joe is a man set apart by God. He can't be governed by the same laws as ordinary folks. Whatever he does is right. It may seem strange to us sometimes, but it isn't ours to question, because he's got the mark of the Lord upon him. You've got a great chance if you'll serve as a dutiful, obedient wife."

"I truly want to be a good wife to Joe. But, Mrs. Smith, wouldn't it be a good thing for him if he made a living like other people? This divining is so uncertain. My father always said . . ."

"Your father is no judge, Emma."

Summoning all her courage, the girl insisted, "But, after all, he is my father. Our ways were so different from yours. It is difficult to change . . ."

"Remember, my child, the Good Book says, 'Thou shalt have one man and cleave unto him.' Didn't Ruth promise her husband when she followed him into a strange land, 'Thy God shall be my God; thy people shall be my people'? You made your choice and should abide by it cheerfully and dutifully."

Emma was moved by the woman's apparent sincerity and the force of the Biblical arguments. Perhaps Joe's mother was right. Perhaps it was her duty to forget her homesickness—to accept the Smiths with all their strange thoughts and ways and devote herself to her husband's destiny. If what she suspected about herself for the past week were true, there was an added reason for her to stop struggling, to fall in with the life of the Smiths. In her secret heart she felt that until this new fear had come to haunt her she could escape. Had she been willing to leave Joe she believed that her father would forgive her if she went back and threw herself on his mercy. But now, if her suspicions were true, that was out of the question. She was irrevocably tied to the Smith family.

She spoke impulsively: "I'll try, Mrs. Smith—I mean Mother Smith. I'll do my best."

When they rose to walk back to the house, the older woman's major purpose accomplished, Mrs. Smith said in her shrewd,

thin voice, "By the way, Emma, have you written to ask your pa for your things?"

"No," the girl's voice broke as she spoke defensively, "I don't like to ask my father for anything—now."

"That's no way to feel! Those things are yours and you've done no wrong. You're entitled to them. Besides, you need them more than he does. That walnut suite will come in real handy. If you get those things, Pa and the boys will build on another room for you and Joe," she suggested, cannily. "And if you're a good wife, the Lord 'll bless you with a son." She surveyed the girl's body with a speculative eye, and added, "I wouldn't be surprised if you'd already been blessed."

Emma flushed. Although she knew it would be useless to protect her secret long, some instinct forced her to say impetuously, "No, no. I'm all right." To cover her confusion, she added quickly, "Perhaps you are right about the furniture."

Hope had come into Emma's eyes as she thought of a large, clean room for Joe and herself, with some of her own things about. If they had such a room of their own, a baby might be a great blessing, after all.

"I'll write to Mother to-day." She spoke with determination, then paused, a troubled look coming into her face again. "Oh, is Joe back yet?"

"No, he won't be back until supper-time. He's meeting Mr. Rigdon in Palmyra."

"Who is this Mr. Rigdon?"

There was anxiety in Emma's voice. Joe had had frequent meetings during the last months with the mysterious stranger who had attended that first religious meeting. It was significant that she had not dared to question either Joe or his mother too closely regarding Sidney Rigdon's inexplicable visits. Under the mood of their talk to-day she hoped Joe's mother might confide in her, but her question only evoked an instant guardedness in Mrs. Smith, who evaded a direct answer.

"Oh, he's some friend of Joe's. A smart man—from Ohio. He and Joe have got some business to look after."

Emma's heart recoiled. Again the door had been slammed in her face. With heavy heart she entered the house and began the tasks for the noontime meal.

Chapter Nine

JOE HAD NOT TAKEN HIS MARRIAGE TOO SERIOUSLY. HE FOUND A wife rather pleasant, even convenient, but it had not occurred to him to feel any responsibility for her happiness. He had many other more important things to do. Then, too, women had always come easily to him; as a consequence, he took them for granted. Marriage had never entered his mind until he met Emma, and, although pique and desire for her had partially motivated his suit, undoubtedly the major considerations had been her superior position and fortune. She would be useful; her culture and learning, he felt, could somehow be turned to good account. At the time of their marriage it had been his firm intention to obtain the advantages the Hale family possessed.

He had not for a moment doubted his ultimate success. Although illiterate, he possessed an uncanny, natural genius for managing people. His easy manner of address, his mild and winning charm on occasion, and his instinctive understanding of human nature in its most obvious manifestations, enabled him to persuade them even against their better judgment. Entirely unmoral, he had no scruples about taking what he could get. He had relied upon these methods of his past success to win his point with Isaac Hale, and would probably have succeeded even here had his interests not been deflected into more promising channels.

Nevertheless, he had not forgotten the bitter words with which Mr. Hale had scourged him. Perhaps part of his indifference to Emma could be explained on the basis of the resentment that had followed his meeting with Hale, for Joe was not one to forget those who had crossed him in his schemes. Abnormally sensitive on the score of his social position and inordinately ambitious to shine before his fellow-men, he met all opposition with vengeful hate.

Joe's temperamental peculiarities, however, could not account entirely for his neglect of his wife. A new and absorbing interest had taken hold of him in the person of the mysterious stranger. His long and unexplained absences from home had grown out of his friendship with this man. On the night of the "experience" meeting he had first attended, the well-dressed stranger had come directly to him.

"I have news for you of great importance. Where can we talk alone?"

"I'll meet you outside."

Joe's canny knowledge of people told him that this was no ordinary man. It was obvious he had not come to the meeting

to be cured of rheumatism or to find buried treasures, and so he followed him out of the house with alacrity.

They had gone to the stranger's room in the inn at Palmyra and had talked far into the night. There Brother Joseph obtained his first real vision of power. He had come away from that interview, the first of many that followed, and had ridden home along the dark road, his mind aflame with the blazing glory of which he had been dreaming and talking for so many years. The stranger was undoubtedly God's angel sent to show him the way. Already his mind was forming the pattern of a consistent story.

And he was not mistaken in his estimate of the importance of this meeting. Sidney Rigdon's coming to Palmyra was the turning-point in Joe's life—his influence the most noted in the young man's career. Every phase of Joe's unnatural, undisciplined life had made fertile the soil in which this man would sow. Ma Smith, for all her fanatical exaggerations and greedy ambitions for her son's advancement, had done no more than fan the flame of his hopes. She had fostered a potential megalomaniac, but her abysmal ignorance and primitive fanaticism precluded his exploitation. Her will was strong, but her mind was weak and chaotic. Sidney Rigdon's peculiar genius supplied the necessary order and direction.

Enjoined to the strictest secrecy, Joe's protracted visits with Rigdon had not been fully explained even to his mother. He had pacified her by the method he had learned to use in childhood.

"I am deep in revelations. I have been commanded to tell no one. But soon there will be great news. I look into the stone every day and see gold, gold, gold!"

Her eyes flickered greedily. "But Mr. Rigdon? What's he got to do with it?"

"The Lord sent him straight to our door that Sunday night. He's a smart man—speaks seven languages and has read hundreds of books. He helps me when I look into the stone. But don't ask any more questions now. You'll know everything when the proper time comes. Meanwhile you might figure out how to spend all the money we're going to have."

The old woman had been impressed by the "fine gentleman," but a little resentful of her exclusion from the cabalistic proceedings. Still she held her peace.

Joe sat with Rigdon in the now familiar room in the White Horse Inn. It was to be their last interview for some time. Sidney was on his way to Philadelphia and would leave on the morning stage. They sat at a small table, facing each other. In

strong contrast to Joe's healthy bulk, Rigdon's body was small and fragile. He had the thin, narrow face of the ascetic. Cold blue eyes looked out speculatively from under black, jutting brows. His forehead was high, intelligent. A man of about forty, he was meticulously groomed in the characteristic long coat and stiff white stocks of the parson. With slender, sensitive hands he emphasized his final instructions to Joe. His voice was arresting and cultivated.

"I think everything is planned—in readiness for our first important step. I strongly urge that you follow the order agreed upon. Is it clear to you?"

"Yes."

"Here is my Philadelphia address. I do not plan to return for several weeks. I shall bring with me all that we need. If an emergency arises, write me."

The two men rose and clasped hands. A look of satisfaction that had in it something of a secret understanding passed between them, but their farewells were casual and brief.

Emma had written her mother a long letter. It was a masterpiece of deception, over which she had struggled bravely. Although she longed to forget her pride, to pour out the heart-break of these six months, she had been restrained by the desire to save her mother pain. She had written one brief note soon after her flight stating simply that she had arrived safely and that her mother was not to worry. No answer had come, owing, she knew, to her father's objection. The nostalgic longing for her home during these trying months had been coloured by her sense of guilt for the suffering she knew she had inflicted. Now she was checked by the natural undemonstrativeness of her rearing, and, in her second letter, she had written her mother simply and sincerely of her regret over any unhappiness she had caused. She had then described her new life in such a way as to reassure her mother. This had been difficult, and Emma, reading the letter before she sent it, prayed God to forgive all the deception it contained. In closing, she had inquired whether her father would permit her to have the things her grandmother had left her.

In two weeks the post brought the reply. She now held it in her trembling hands—a blue envelope addressed in the thin, slanting hand in which her mother kept the daily account book. As she looked at the precious bit of paper—the first word she had had from home—her heart seemed to swell and she felt a wild impulse to clasp it close—to run far away to read it. But it was raining, and so instead she went to her little attic bedroom

and there, alone, she opened the envelope with trembling, eager hands.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER EMMA: Your letter was received and read with great relief as you may well imagine. I showed it to your father and after prayerful consideration he has told me to answer it in the following manner. First, I think I must tell you that your father is changed in many ways. He seems aged and broken and I have much worry about his health. I do not tell you this to reproach you, but because I think you should know. Our lives are very difficult now. The house seems too big and the days too long.

But what is done cannot be undone and I'm not one to cry over spilled milk. There's nothing to be gained by reproaches or by trying to place blame. Perhaps we are as much responsible as anyone. After a terrible struggle, your father has decided that it's his Christian duty to forgive you and your husband. He thinks that he, like Job, has been severely tried, but as the Lord commands us to forgive seventy times seven, he says he will obey. If you and Mr. Smith will come back and lead respectable Christian lives, he will forget the past. He says to tell your husband that if he will forsake all witchcraft, join a church, and live a moral life, he will take him into the business and you can come and live with us.

It took no little consideration to bring your father to this, Emma. It would break your heart to see how he's suffered. He no longer accepts invitations to preach, as he feels that he has no right now to advise others how to live. The talk in the village after your elopement was hard to bear. People spoke to us as if someone had died, and we felt a little that way. Although things can't ever be exactly the same, we want you back, daughter. You're all we've got, and if you'll come back to Harmony we shall let bygones be bygones and make the best of everything.

We've had a dry summer. The vegetable garden has burned up, so I could do but little canning. I shipped two hundred chickens down the river to Philadelphia and your father's business is about the same, although he doesn't take much interest in it. After all that happened, Frank decided to leave Harmony. He went out West, some place in Illinois where he is working in a lawyer's office. We expect him to do much. Grandma Payne died in June. Went peacefully in her sleep. Reverend Williams came from Philadelphia to preach the service. Josiah Buck died soon after you left. They say your husband predicted his death that night on Wilderness Hill. Mrs. Lillard has a new baby, a boy. That makes the sixth. This is about all the news.

Emma, I won't beg you, but I hope you'll be guided to take your father's offer and come home. He says to tell you that your things are safe. If you decide not to return, they are yours when you send for them.

YOUR MOTHER.

P.S.—Jenny Vale drowned herself by jumping over Cascade Falls. It happened about a week after you went away. She left a note saying she wanted to die because the gossip had made her life unbearable, and because she had been commanded by the Lord to do it, but most folks think there were other reasons.

The letter transported Emma to her home. She saw her mother's troubled, kindly face; she heard her voice speaking the words on the page before her. So complete was the illusion that, on laying down the letter, she had looked with a shock at the crude bed on which she sat as she realized where she was. The tears came to her eyes. She had not known before how very lonely she had been. "Dear Mother, poor Father, why did I do this to you? You would let me come back—Joe too . . . if he would . . . if he would. Oh, if only my baby could be born in my own nice clean room . . ."

Her heart grew light as she pictured them together in Harmony, in a decent dwelling. She would spend happy, busy days with her mother in the big kitchen. Joe would go to work in her father's store each morning like an honest, respectable citizen. Soon they would have their own home and people would look up to them just as they looked up to her own mother and father. "Oh, God, if we only could!" A light of determination came into her eyes, and with the blessed letter in the bosom of her dress, she went in search of Joe.

It was late afternoon when he rode up to the farm in a state of high excitement. Emma, who had been watching the road eagerly all day, ran out to meet him. She did want to find him in a happy mood. It would be so much easier to read the letter to him and to hope for his approval. But even before she spoke, she knew that it was useless. There was about his face that look of evasive secrecy she had come to know and dread.

"Hallo! What are you doing out here?"

As he dismounted, she started to take his hand, but he paid no attention and turned towards the house. She must speak now. Once in the house with his mother's prying eyes upon them, there would be no chance.

In desperation she burst forth all in one breath, "Joe, I had a letter from Mother—they want us to come back—Father will forgive us and take you into the business."

He halted abruptly and turned upon her.

"He'll forgive us, will he? You just tell him to keep his damned forgiveness for the Presbyterians. They'll need it. As for his business, we're going to have one that 'll make his look like a worn-out continental."

He swaggered into the house, but Emma did not follow him. She turned away and in dumb misery went slowly down the road to be alone.

Chapter Ten

THE USUAL SUNDAY EVENING MEETING WAS DRAWING TO A CLOSE. Emma sat aloof in the back of the room, watching with the puzzled, brooding air she had come to wear so consistently. It had been an unusually lonely day for her. She had not seen Joe since their brief interview the afternoon before, after which she had gone to the woods near the house until darkness had fallen. When she returned, Ma Smith reproached her:

“You should have been here, Emma, to serve your husband. He’s gone on an important and dangerous journey.”

In quick alarm Emma asked, “But where? I just left him a little while ago. He didn’t tell me he was going away.”

“The Angel of the Lord called him and he’s gone forth to follow the gleam,” she said. Then forgetting for a moment her chronic resentment against Emma, she confided in a hushed, thrilled voice, “The great hour is near at hand. We shall see the dawn of a new day—miracles, gold, power, a new religion.”

The old woman’s eyes were avid and eager. Lost in her own visions, she soon forgot Emma and fidgeted about the house that evening, her febrile thoughts escaping from time to time in vague mutterings.

Joe had not returned all night nor during the long hours of the following day. But Mrs. Smith’s faith in an impending miracle was undeterred. She opened the meeting this evening in an excited voice.

“Brothers and sisters, you notice that Brother Joseph is not with us, but we are here to wait for him. Last night the Angel summoned him and even now he may be returning with a new Revelation. In the meantime, let us form the Mystic Circles and proceed with our testimony as we watch and pray.”

For the next two hours the room presented the spectacle to which Emma had grown accustomed on these Sunday nights. Seated in groups of seven, the faithful clasped hands, their eyes fixed and staring. They testified, sang with bodies swaying to the syncopated rhythm of gospel hymns, prayed and shouted. Their heavy peasant bodies in coarse clothes made grotesqueries of shadows. In the flickering flames of the candles, their faces, heavily planed and deeply lined, looked like the primitive masks of some barbaric people.

Emma, sitting in one of the circles, her right hand held by the middle-aged woman who had been cured of barrenness, her left by that of a flushed young man—one of Joe’s diggers—felt herself slipping into the hypnotic mood these services often induced. It was always so—the sense of shock which the first meeting produced so keenly had lessened with each succeeding

Sunday evening, and she was a bit ashamed to find herself more and more drawn by their incomprehensible but intoxicating spirit. At first she had been so close to the formal, comparatively unemotional Presbyterian regime in Harmony that she felt only curiosity and abhorrence for anything so different from her father's religion. Immature though she was, her critical faculties had urged her to reject such practices as religious, but gradually, almost imperceptibly, the passage of weeks had dulled these faculties. The unquestionable sincerity and satisfaction of Joe's devotees could not help but arouse her sympathy in spite of the obvious agility with which Ma Smith and Joe twisted the Scriptures to support their novel beliefs. Then, too, she had come to find in these meetings a sort of release from the drab misery of the weekly grind. Her questioning resistance gradually weakened.

Although she did not lose herself completely in the rapt ecstasies, she swam dangerously near, excited by the feeling that she might be drawn into the whirlpool at any moment. She envied these poor people their complete self-abandonment—their drugged forgetfulness of their ugly, thwarted lives, their escape from the monotonous struggle of the frontier. She, too, wanted to stop thinking, simply to believe and feel what they believed and felt. It would be much easier.

To-night she felt herself slipping completely. With closed eyes she forgot her past life as she gave herself up to the weird forces that seemed to permeate the room. Mesmerized, she waited anxiously for the appearance of her lord and master. During these meetings, if she thought of Joe as her husband, it was only with great humility. To-night she felt completely detached from him in the flesh, as her excited imagination pictured him borne into their midst on a cloud of flaming glory.

There was a commotion at the door. Instantly the room became tense as all eyes turned expectantly. The door was thrown open and Joe entered and halted. Drawn to his full height, his head back and arm upraised as if in command for attention, he spoke in a breathless, awesome, dramatic voice:

“Lo! I bring you glad tidings—revelation, prophecy, commandment! Attend, all ye chosen!”

His clothing was torn and dishevelled, his shirt in tatters, his boots caked with mud. But upon his coarsely handsome face there was a triumphant, exultant light. As he moved into the room, the worshippers fell upon their knees. Some shielded their eyes from what they afterwards testified to be the blinding light which shone about his head. In a deep, resonant tone there fell from his lips a majestic flow of words such as they had never before heard.

“Dearly beloved, be it known unto all nations, kindreds,

tongues, and peoples that this day and night hath seen great wonders. The Angel of the Lord hath appeared and revealed unto me the Book of Golden Plates which shall be unto us the one and only Bible. Through its divine power we shall conquer the evil forces of this degenerate world and destroy with one blow all false religions.

“Behold! Looking into the Mystic Stone, I was summoned about midnight last night by the Angel—a tall, slim, well-built, handsome man with a countenance like lightning and a halo about his head. He led me to that spot on the hill where God had first spoken unto me years ago. As I approached the sacred ground, I found myself suddenly surrounded by a circle of ten thousand devils. They threatened me with sulphurous flame and smoke, and, with wild cries, leaped upon me, tearing my clothing and threatening to destroy me if I did not turn back. Undaunted, I fought tooth and nail to preserve my very life. For hours the struggle raged. Not until morning did I finally subdue them. Then, weary and discouraged, I fell into a deep sleep and did not awake until late afternoon. Had it not been for my torn clothes and aching body, I would have thought the night’s experience but a dream. I looked again into the stone to see if I had been mistaken. The Angel appeared on a pillar of light and commanded me to follow!

“And it came to pass, he led me to a miraculous spot on the hill and in a loud voice spoke to me: ‘Joseph, beloved of God, you have been appointed to receive the Revelation of the Most High. It will come to you through the wondrous Golden Plates inscribed by the hand of Mormon, the Angel of the Lord, in a language not now known upon the earth and hidden in this spot for fifteen hundred years. It is entrusted to you who have seen the True Light. It contains commandments for a new religion destined to sweep the world. You, Joseph, are chosen by God to reveal His will. Kneel!’

“Thereupon I fell on my knees. There was a sound as of a great rumbling in the earth and darkness gathered about me. Suddenly the place before me was torn asunder, and there, upon a table of gold, encrusted with precious jewels, lay the Golden Plates. A great light shone all about. ‘Approach and read,’ the Angel commanded, and the mystic letters thereon were writ in gold and much embellished with decorations of a rare and delicate nature. The language was unknown to me, and I exclaimed, ‘But I cannot read!’ In a loud and awful voice the Angel commanded, ‘Look in your stone and the hidden meaning of the words shall be revealed to you.’ Whereupon I looked and, lo! the words gradually dissolved into the language I understood. ‘Read,’ I was again commanded, and I turned to the opening lines.

“ ‘This is the *Book of Mormon*. It is a divine record of My World, of My People, and of My Law. Moreover, it is written in Prophecy and Revelation, written and sealed and hidden from an evil world that it might not be lost, to come forth this day and hour through the miraculous interpretation of the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, Joseph Smith.’

“Then the Angel spoke to me, saying, ‘In a short while the Golden Plates will be delivered to you for translation and publication. Certain helpers for this work will be revealed unto you by the Lord, but none save thyself and those divinely appointed through you may looked upon the plates and live. You will sell the translation to all peoples that the world might be saved in His name. Thy name will spread among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, for so God has willed that thou shall be His instrument for the spread of His holy works. Go now, Prophet Joseph, and tell this story to your faithful followers. And the honour be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen!’ ”

A hushed stillness came over the room. The dramatic intensity of the Prophet’s voice and bearing was sustained until close to the last of this marvellous story, when he changed to a manner of deep humility. The faces of his listeners were transfused with the light of credulous wonder. They had *seen* the Angel ; they had *heard* the voice. In silence, with veneration, they moved towards their Prophet. They touched him wonderingly. Ma Smith, her witch-like face transfixed with a paradoxical look of elation, mumbled over and over in a sort of ecstasy, “The Power and the Glory shall be his. The Power and the Glory shall be his. . . .”

They did not break the spell by speech or song. The new Prophet stood quietly, receiving their homage unquestioningly. His hand touched each of the faithful in benediction. One by one they left the house in awed silence. Emma watched them go. She had listened in amazement to the astonishing Revelation. Although the tone and manner were not new to her, the words and phrasing were. He must be inspired! How else account for this sudden gift of language? As she looked at him with glowing, almost credulous eyes, crazily there flashed through her mind the image of the little black dog, lying limp and bleeding in the bottom of the pit on Wilderness Hill.

Chapter Eleven

THE FAME OF THE SUNDAY NIGHT MEETINGS SPREAD FAR AND wide and attracted so many curious and credulous that it was often necessary to meet out of doors or to hold continuous sessions through the afternoon and evening. For the most part the audiences were made up of religious enthusiasts, with which this section of New York was then filled. They were poor, ignorant, excitable people who had come West with the hope of making an easy living, or at least of escaping the difficulties of their life back East. Joe's elaborate promises of earthly as well as of heavenly treasures filled their imaginations with dreams of magnificence and grandeur.

The stories of the Prophet's visions and miraculous powers varied and expanded in a wealth of fantastic detail as his name became more and more the subject of general conversation. The newspapers, for the most part antagonistic, reported them with barely suppressed ridicule. The intelligent viewed them with scorn or amused curiosity. Except for the faithful few, no one took them seriously. Visitors to these parts, in the course of a walk or drive, always had pointed out to them the yawning excavations that marked Prophet Joseph's treasure diggings and were told lurid stories of the Sunday sessions of the "Peekers," which invariably led them to exclaim, "What? Is it possible in this enlightened year of 1826?"

After Joe's prophetic announcement of the Golden Plates, Turkey Hill—the alleged scene of the Revelation—was rechristened Mormon Hill, the people flocked from near and far to view this wondrous spot—a circular bare knoll, matted with weeds and scrubby brush. Most of them came to scoff and but a few remained to pray. Weird, fantastic tales sprang up concerning the marvels of the hill. Strange lights, some said, flashed across the sky, subterranean thunders shook the earth, and demons in nocturnal orgies threatened the unwary. Everybody talked of these curious phenomena, but none save the orthodox clergy and a few newspaper editors raised a voice of warning. To the pious this whole business, like so much of the the religious fanaticism then pervading the country, was the work of the devil.

Yet even within the close walls of the church an occasional convert to Mormonism was made. Such a one was Hezekiah Tunk. Hezekiah was considered by his neighbours an honest and industrious, if somewhat peculiar, citizen. A man of about fifty, he had spent the last twenty years farming in the neighbourhood of Palmyra, and had accumulated a handsome fortune. In most matters he was sober, sane, even cautious, but

in religion he was a visionary and fanatic. He had much in common with Joe's mother. A voracious reader of the Bible, he was able, so some said, to repeat from memory nearly every text from beginning to end, giving the exact chapter and verse in each case. This was undoubtedly an exaggeration; nevertheless, his prodigious knowledge of the Scriptures made it difficult for even the learned to dispute his contentions from Biblical authority.

Although a member in good standing of the Methodist Church, he had for many years manifested great credulity in many of the numerous "isms" that swept through the neighbourhood. He was a firm believer in ghosts, spirits, and visions, and claimed to have seen both Jesus Christ and the devil, the former being "the handsomest man" he had ever looked upon, and the latter "resembling a jackass with the short smooth hair of a rat."

Had it not been for the stabilizing influence of his sensible and intelligent wife, he would have been annexed long before this to one or another of the latest cults. But Patience Tunk, far shrewder than her husband, was a Quakeress of positive notions and had deterred him until now from any such affiliation.

Hezekiah had known Joe and was interested in his new religion, but he had never dared to attend any of the meetings. One day about a week after the Prophet's great Revelation, as Hezekiah came out of the Palmyra bank, he ran into Joe, who stopped directly in front of him, touched him significantly on the forehead, and, without greeting, addressed him solemnly and mysteriously.

"Hezekiah Tunk, thou art the man!"

Hezekiah stared at him blankly. "Who? Me? What do you mean? I don't understand."

"The Lord has commanded me to stop the first man I meet and to require of him fifty dollars, said fifty dollars to be used to assist me in doing the work of the Lord through the translation of His sacred words—the *Book of Mormon*. 'Cast thy bread upon the waters and it shall return to thee after many days.' "

Joe's tone was authoritative and prophetic, his gaze direct and unwavering. Hezekiah stared at him wide-eyed, started to speak, hesitated, then without a word opened his purse, counted out the money, and handed it over. The Prophet pocketed the money, saying, "Receive God's thanks through His servant. You shall devote yourself to the spread of the Revealed Truth." He swung off down the street, leaving Hezekiah overcome with this Revelation from above.

This marked the first practical step in precipitating upon an unsuspecting world the mystic *Book of Mormon*. Inasmuch as the Prophet could not write legibly, he persuaded Hezekiah,

who was a man of moderate education, to serve as amanuensis. Brother Joseph had some difficulty in doing this, largely because of Mrs. Tunk's strenuous objections. But a special Revelation clinched the matter—

“And when the Angel called me back and delivered the Golden Plates into my hands, he said, ‘Go ye to Hezekiah Tunk—he who will help you in my work to make a new religion and thus save the world from ruin. To him and to him only shall be entrusted the divine mission of writing down the translation of the mystic characters as they are revealed to you in the stone.’”

Hezekiah had never been closer to God.

“You mean you have the *Book of Golden Plates* in your possession . . . now?” His eyes popped wide in amazement.

“I have.”

“Can I see it?”

“The command of the Angel is that ‘No man can look upon it with the naked eye and live.’ Do you want to risk the curse of God?”

“No! No! But I just wondered how I could write without seeing it.”

“All that has been taken care of. You must have faith. Come over to-morrow morning at nine o'clock and we will begin.”

“My wife won't like this. She's terribly opposed to such things.”

“Don't tell her. Don't tell anyone. When the Bible is published and the money begins to roll in, she'll feel different about it.”

“You mean we'll sell it . . . make money?”

“Money? Of course we'll make money—thousands of dollars. We're going to build an Empire. Takes money to do that.”

Hezekiah hunched his narrow shoulders as a gleam came into his small, beady eyes.

“Who'll get this money?”

“Those who help the most. ‘Each according to his works.’ The Revelation made that quite clear.”

Brother Joseph was not unaware of Hezekiah's cupidity. He knew that sooner or later he would have to account for the fifty dollars he had borrowed. Then, too, the spread of the Gospel would require heavy financing, and Hezekiah was one of the few wealthy farmers in the community. He added meaningfully, “I, as Prophet, hope you will accept the post of Apostle. It means great responsibility, but it also means great glory.” He paused while this idea entered into and permeated the mind of Hezekiah.

“I'll be there,” the farmer said with determination. . . .

On the next morning and every other morning during the

following months, Hezekiah *was* there, and together they went into a small shack on the Smith farm, where they worked on the translation. The shack was out of sight of the house, and, since the family had been given strict orders on pain of death to protect them from the enemies of Mormon, the two servants of God worked in secrecy and without interruption.

To the naturally curious inquiries as to the actual manner of translation, Brother Joseph was haughtily and sternly silent. He very early learned the convenience of the Lord's "command to secrecy." Driven into a corner by a too persistent devotee or a too curious outsider, he found refuge by withdrawing into a mysterious and impregnable silence. But to the Sunday night faithful and to the innumerable stragglers who had been associated with the Smiths in their money-digging enterprises the past ten years, there was no denying some report of the work as it progressed. To Ma Smith fell the task of explanation.

"They do it by aid of the Mystic Stone. Prophet Joseph looks into it and sees the divine characters of the Golden Plates change into words. He reads these words to Hezekiah, who writes them down, one by one. When a sentence is finished, Hezekiah says 'Written,' and repeats the sentence. If it's correct, the sentence disappears from the stone. But if they've got it wrong they have to go back and do it all over again."

Needless to say, Ma Smith's account varied from week to week. Any emergency or discrepancy could always be accounted for by another Revelation. There were some determined efforts on the part of individuals to secure possession of the plates. One such incident so threatened disaster that it became necessary for God to send a command post-haste ordering its removal to a spot unknown to anyone but the Prophet.

Two local wags who had often been drinking partners of Joe were emboldened by a generous imbibing of the local drink—a mixture of rum, molasses, and water—to march brazenly into the "holy of holies" where Joe and Hezekiah were at work. Joe sat screened from his scribe as he dictated the sacred words. One of the men demanded to see the Golden Book, and Joe, over-confident by his previous success in forestalling the curious, responded grandiloquently:

"It is forbidden to look upon it, but you can touch it if you approach carefully." Whereupon he brought from behind the screen a small chest covered with a thick black canvas.

"Come on, uncover the thing!" one of the men demanded raucously as Hezekiah stood trembling at this desecration.

"No one can look upon it and live!" Joe threatened.

"Gotta die some time. Egad, I'll see the critter, live or die!"

The man lurched forward, ripped away the cover, and exposed in Joe's hand a large tile brick. The men burst into

boisterous laughter, but Brother Joseph checked their levity when, in terrible anger, he raised the brick as if to strike them, thundering, "God damn you fools and idiots! Do you think I'd expose the sacred writings of the Lord to your dirty hands? I knew what you'd do. If that book had really been in my hand, you'd be dead now, both of you. Didn't the Lord say, 'No one can look upon it and live'?"

He grew quieter as the men, sobered by his towering rage, stared at him shamefacedly. He continued sarcastically: "Too bad I didn't let you look at it! Would have been good riddance of two dirty skunks. If ya still want to look on it . . ." He waited.

"But where . . . where is it?" stammered one of the men.

"It's safe all right! I have but to say one word into the stone and the book is made invisible. You ignorant fools, don't you know that the Angel that could write this Everlasting Gospel and hide it in the earth for fifteen hundred years and then reveal it to me, the Chosen Prophet, would also give me the power to protect it? You've got to believe all or nothin', and if ya want proof, I might bring it back right now, although I'd be committin' murder. Well, what do ya say?"

"I guess we'd better be goin'."

The men hastened away. That night in the Palmyra general store they held an audience spellbound with their story:

"When we tried to see it, there was a terrible noise. Sounded like thunder and the flappin' of wings. Joe was covered with a blazin' light that almost blinded us. We sure was glad to get of there."

"What did it look like?" one of the incredulous listeners inquired.

"Oh, it was heavy and square and covered with a cloth. Prophet Joe let us feel it and it was hard."

"About like a large tile brick," his partner added. . . .

Chapter Twelve

EMMA'S PREGNANCY HAD BEGUN BUT A SHORT TIME BEFORE JOE became a full-fledged Prophet. She had put off admitting it, even to herself, as long as possible. But Ma Smith's hawk-like eyes, ever watchful for this possibility, had detected it almost as soon as Emma. The young girl had had a wretched time; the struggle against nausea and the difficulty of finding palatable food had been bad enough, but added to these were her loneliness, her homesickness, her longing for her mother.

From the moment Ma Smith knew that Emma was with child, she had taken a proprietary attitude towards her—an attitude at first strangely confusing to the girl. The old woman was over solicitous about her well-being, but only, Emma was made to feel, because her well-being would insure that of the grandson. (For, from the beginning, Ma Smith had taken for granted that the child would be a boy; all of her own children, including those that had died, had been sons, and somehow she made Emma feel that it would be a disgrace for her—the wife of the Prophet—to bear a daughter.) She advised, warned, and fussed over every little detail. And she cluttered Emma's life with admonitions based on superstitions and taboos of which the girl had never heard. The furniture in the room had to be arranged in a certain way; she must not look into a mirror; certain days of the weeks had special significations; and she must think only happy, ecclesiastical thoughts.

One day she had picked up a little lamb, and Mrs. Smith had screamed at her, "Put it down! Drop it! Don't you know it's bad luck for a pregnant woman to touch a lamb? Now I suppose all the flock will die." Emma, in anxious fear, had counted the sheep daily after that. None had died, but her worry was a continual strain for many weeks. Ma Smith wanted her to eat certain foods, not for health, but in order to ward off evil spirits. Emma had never before realized how precarious life could be—how many demons there were ever eager to spring upon unwary mortals. Mrs. Smith dinned into her ears story after story of her own amazing pregnancies. So doggedly did she pursue her that there were times when Emma wondered if the old lady were not having the baby herself.

Pa Smith tried in his futile way to be sympathetic. Joe's brothers were curious about her condition. The older ones were accustomed to their mother's continuous pregnancies, but to the younger boys, Emma's "state" was the occasion for furtive glances and whispered speculations.

Joe's part in her life during the last eight months had been hectic and uncertain. There had been brief periods of happiness

—hours in which she had shared his graphic visions of the Power and the Glory, for she had almost reconciled herself to his Messiahship and all its queer accompaniments. These hours had usually come when they were alone in their own room following the excitement of a Sunday evening meeting. At such times, when he came to her flushed with the adulation of his followers, his mind burning with ambition, there was in the abandonment of his passion a certain generosity, to which the hungry girl responded with pathetic eagerness. This was the inconsistency she never understood—that in spite of his ruthless, callous, selfish nature, he was a warm and passionate lover. Sometimes, lying in his arms, feeling the strong beat of his heart close to hers, she would strain through the darkness to look on his face, to peer into his eyes wonderingly. Could this yielding human being enveloping her so ardently be the same person who had sat opposite her at the evening meal, aloof and indifferent? There had been several occasions in the beginning when she had considered running away, but he had only to take possession of her as her lover and all such plans dissolved. She loved him.

After his curt refusal to consider her father's invitation to return to Harmony and settle down, she had had a severe struggle with herself. At the time Joe did not know of her pregnancy, and in the light of subsequent events—his Revelation and all the attendant excitement—she forgave him this cruelty.

At first, when he had learned that she would bear him a child, he had taken it lightly and humorously, almost indifferently. But one day the mysterious stranger came to the house for dinner. Emma was embarrassed by his knowing and interested scrutiny. She felt again, as on the first night she had seen him, a wave of distrust and resentment sweep over her. The feeling was annoying and inexplicable, for the man's bearing was dignified and inoffensive. His superiority to the environment here was obvious; she should have been drawn to him, but there was something coldly calculating about his manner that repelled her. She felt subtly that his influence on Joe could not be a good one and she wished that it might be terminated.

It was strangely coincident that after that day there was a marked change in Joe's attitude towards her. On the following Sunday night, without warning to her, he announced to the faithful with customary solemnity the latest Revelation: "The Angel appeared unto me and said, 'A new commandment I give unto you. Lo, thy wife hath conceived and shall bear a male child and thou shalt call him Joseph. Thus the order of thy seed shall be established on the face of the earth to carry on from generation to generation without ceasing.'"

From that night Emma had become to Joseph less a woman

than an instrument for carrying out his Messianic schemes. He had neglected her more and more. His absorption in the *Book of Mormon*, the increasing demands on his time as the translation neared completion, his unexplained all-night absences from home—all these served to increase her brooding loneliness. She grew into herself, walking carefully and silently, a lost soul in the bedlam of the Smith household.

She had sent to Harmony for her furniture. When Joe read her mother's letter, his sole comment was, "We'll send over right away and get your stuff. Peter Ingersol is moving the Harknesses to Susquehanna County next week. He can bring it back."

Summoning all of her courage, she pleaded, "Joe, let us go home. You promised me that you would give up this business . . . that night we left home—on the ride over—we made our plans. Have you forgotten?"

"But that was before the Revelation," he answered coldly, pushing aside her outstretched hands.

"Oh, Joe, I'm afraid of all this. There's something not quite natural—something dangerous—about it."

Anger flashed in his eyes.

"Fine wife you are! Tryin' to tell me what my business should be. Lot you know about it. You were interested enough in it before you came here!"

"But I didn't know. I didn't understand. I would never have come away if I had thought . . ."

"Damn shame you didn't think of it. Instead of helping me you're trying to stand in my way."

"But, Joe, I can't help you. You don't seem to want me . . ."

"I want you, all right. You can help me by being a good wife, instead of urging me to go back and humble myself before your father—ask for forgiveness—settle down and become a small frog in a little pond."

"Yes, but I do that only because I love you—because I want you to be respected."

"Look here, Emma, if that's what's worrying you, forget it." His anger faded under her tender concern for his well-being, and he magnanimously reassured her: "We're going to have plenty of 'respect' from a lot more people than you ever dreamed of. We're going to be famous and rich and powerful and you'll be the first lady! I tell you this is the real thing."

"But Rigdon . . . who is he?"

"Oh, he's just interested in the new religion. A smart fellow—intelligent. I'm using him to help me get things started."

"Joe, people become so angry at us, sometimes I'm afraid of what might happen."

"Now don't you bother about all these things. We'll soon

have the Bible out, and then we'll have money and a big, new house where you won't have to worry. You send for your things and leave the rest to me."

He patted her shoulder gently. Under this unusual gesture of kindness, all her resistance melted away.

"But where shall we put it, Joe?" She shuddered as she thought of her grandmother's walnut set in the Smith attic.

"I'll have Pa and the boys get busy right away and build on a room for us. We can use that until we get the new house."

And so it had been done. Alone, in the new, white-washed room, the familiar furniture about her, she could imagine that she was at home. Ma Smith and the family rarely intruded. They did not feel comfortable there, and Emma did not encourage them to come. As the time approached for her delivery, she spent most of the hours of the day in her room. She sat before the window in the little rocker her mother had used to rock her to sleep when she was a child. Although her hands always held some sewing—small white garments for the baby Prophet—often they fell listlessly into her lap as her sad eyes stared unseeing out of the window. . . .

She was in the last month of her pregnancy and trying hard to find the courage to face her ordeal, when a series of incidents rushed upon her with calamitous speed and ferocity. They invaded the calm of her little room with insidious truculence. Not even here could she escape. The listless hands became agitated, the sad eyes haunted. . . .

First, there was the ugly climax to the Tunk episode. Joe, eager to win Mrs. Tunk's favour and financial support, had permitted Hezekiah to take home portions of the translation. That he had implicit faith in his ability to win over the wife of Hezekiah was evidenced by the fact that he kept no copy. He included with the translation an affirmed version of the original mystic characters. She was to examine them in strictest secrecy and return them within the week.

But Mrs. Tunk was shrewder than Joe anticipated. When Hezekiah left his house the next morning, she boarded the coach for New York City, taking the precious documents to Professor Anthon, the distinguished linguist, whose name had been given to her by Parson Eller in Palmyra. She told the Professor her story and left the manuscripts for his inspection. When she returned the next day, he said to her, "Mrs. Tunk, I fear your husband has been duped by a hoax. I have examined these characters carefully. They are the most singular and meaningless hodge-podge imaginable. It looks as if someone has taken them from various alphabets—Egyptian, Phœnician, Hebrew, Chaldaic, Assyriac, Greek, and Roman—and put them together in the manner of a crazy quilt. Some are upside

down. Some of them strangely resemble the symbols on the Mexican calendar. They are utterly meaningless and can have no possible connection with the so-called translation, which looks to me like a mixture of the New Testament and romantic fiction. I advise you strongly to get the advice of my friend, Pastor Eller, to expose these tricksters, and to rescue your husband from their swindling schemes!"

Mrs. Tunk thanked the professor, returned to her room in the hotel, and, with a light of righteous indignation on her face, tore the papers into shreds, threw them into the grate, and watched with great satisfaction as they crumbled into ashes. On her return home, however, she refused to tell Hezekiah what she had done with them. Having reported Professor Anthon's opinion, she added, "It's an evil, dastardly trick. I'll do all I can to prevent the publication of such lies!"

"Well, what if it is a lie?" Hezekiah roared. "If you'll let me alone, I'll make some money out of it!"

But Mrs. Tunk was obdurate. Hezekiah raged, pleaded, threatened, and whined like a crazy, senile old man. In fright at what Joe might do when he learned of the catastrophe, he became abusive, beat her, and one night drove her in her nightgown from the house. She fled to the home of Pastor Eller, and refused to return to Hezekiah unless he completely severed all relations with the Smiths. Later she instituted proceedings in court to protect her husband's property, on the ground that Joe was deceiving Hezekiah in alleging the existence of the Golden Plates. Although witnesses swore that the whole scheme was a fraud and deception, the case was dismissed when Tunk denied that he had ever contributed a dollar to Joe at his suggestion.

All this and much more Emma had learned from Pastor Eller, who had come as an emissary to the Smith place, pleading with Joe in the name of Christian decency to give up his nefarious scheme. The story of Mrs. Tunk's trip to New York City and her subsequent separation from her husband was given wide publicity, and the reverberations of the growing animosity towards Joe and the *Book of Mormon* reached Emma in ominous warning.

Hezekiah came to the Prophet in cringing terror. Joe's consternation gave way to anger, then despair, for what threatened catastrophe for them all.

"My God! Everything is lost! We are ruined! How can they be replaced?"

When Hezekiah suggested the possibility of simply re-translating the plates through the stone, Joe did not deign to explain why this could not be done. Apparently the Lord had agreed to reveal His mystic purpose only once. Drinking heavily, and

feverishly seeking ways to avert disaster to the enterprise, Joe had vented his rage on the family, and Emma came to listen with dread for his late entrances into her room.

The sudden reappearance of the mysterious stranger at this time was again the occasion of much conjecture. Still no explanation was made, but in a short time Joe proclaimed another Revelation: "The Lord is displeased with me, His servant, for my imprudence in placing in hands other than those expressly designated by the Angel the holy translation. He has rebuked me for my foolish pride. I wished only to win converts to our Faith, but I should have waited until the Lord commanded. To punish me, I am forbidden to rewrite the sacred words of the lost pages. We are to proceed without them."

Joe sharply pursued the advantage Hezekiah's predicament gave him. His threat of expulsion reduced the poor old farmer to a state of abject, unqualified surrender, and he promised to mortgage his farm still further and to turn the money over to Joe without guarantee, the money to be used for printing the *Book of Mormon*.

Emma was distressed by the whole unhappy incident. She had liked Mrs. Tunk and felt that a great wrong had been done her. The final separation of Hezekiah and his wife haunted her mind with cruel persistence.

While this tumult raged, the numerous and sundry creditors of the Smith family became more insistent in their demands for payment, and the constable was often at their door. Circulation of the story that Joe was printing a book which promised him a fortune revived the languishing hopes of those to whom the Smiths had been in debt for years. They beat a path to the door, and scarcely a day passed in which Emma did not overhear their importunate and imprecatory demands. Handling them was Ma Smith's job. She put aside her sanctimonious air and vented her wrath upon them with all the fury of a fish-wife. She was an old and practised hand at this business and seemed almost to enjoy it. Emma, listening one morning at the door of her room, overheard her berate a merchant from Palmyra who had presented a grocery bill of five years' standing.

"Now see here, Jim, I'm tired of your dunning us for money. You can't get blood out of a turnip, and I tell you we haven't any money—yet."

"But you've owed this bill five years. You've certainly had money enough to pay during that time."

"Of course—we've had lots," she shrieked angrily. "But we've had to use it for more important things. We've got to carry on the Lord's work."

"You mean the devil's. You owe me this money. You ate it up in groceries. You owe everybody else in the town. We're

gettin' tired of waitin' and want you to know that you'd better pay up pretty soon if you know what's——”

“Now, now, Jim,” she interrupted smugly, “the Lord's promised to take care of His own.”

“But the Lord isn't paying my bill.”

“That's because you haven't been converted.”

“If you spent less time in convertin' and more time in honest work, you'd get your bills paid.”

Ma Smith smirked and spoke unctuously. “The Good Book says, ‘They toil not, neither do they spin; yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.’ The Lord will provide for us all, Jim, if you'll just trust Him.”

Jim, nonplussed and spluttering, threatened her. “I'll have ye jailed if this bill ain't paid shortly! I've been put off long enough!”

Mrs. Smith, alarmed, began to wheedle, “Now, you can wait a little longer, Jim. The new Bible 'll be published in a few weeks and we'll have plenty to pay everybody.”

“Bible or no Bible, I want this bill settled.”

As he had gone cursing down the path, Emma, sick and pale, had wondered what her father would say to such a scene. . . . This constant persecution by their creditors as well as the tragic Tunk situation had worn heavily upon her. She was humiliated . . . helpless . . . caught in a network of enmeshing circumstances. These troubles were bad enough and Emma was ashamed, but her final ignominy came when she learned of Joe's infidelity.

In the course of his professional duties many women came to see him. Sitting in the “experience” meetings, Emma had listened to the testimonials which some of these women gave regarding Joe's miraculous ministrations, but she had been too cowed, too repressed to utter any fears she may have had. That Joe was attractive to women, she had long known and intuitively understood. But at this point in her life she was too lacking in experience to grasp even the possibility of promiscuity. There were enough difficulties to face—enough adjustments to be made—without this further complication.

So long as he was her lover, few definite fears of this nature concerned her. But she was expecting her baby in June, and for the last three months she had seen less and less of Joe. Now that her body was large and clumsy, she felt a vague sense of embarrassment; she wanted to hide her deformity from him, and felt some relief by his protracted and frequent absences from their room. Often when he came in late, if he had not been drinking, he would ease his huge body on to the bed to avoid waking her. She would give no sign that she had lain awake during the long hours, but always there was that dreadful

ache in her heart—that desire for some word or some little gesture of tenderness. It never came. Now that she was awkward and heavy with child, it seemed to her that he no longer loved her.

Among the many women coming to the Sunday meetings, Emma had noticed a young girl addressed as Sister Margaret. Not yet a convert, she came as a seeker; she hung upon every word of the Prophet avidly. Although Joe sometimes talked with her privately after the meetings, there was no apparent favouritism in his proselytizing.

One late afternoon in May, Emma took her slow and cautious walk to the customary grove in the ravine near the house. She supposed Joe to be at work in the shack and had not noticed anyone come through the yard. As she guarded her steps down the path, her thoughts were far away. She heard no voices and had no warning of what she saw when she parted the branches of the willows and stepped into a small hidden place she had come to regard as her own.

She stood rigid . . . frozen. . . . She did not cry out, but her hands covered her face as she turned away. The girl—Margaret—was too terrified to move, but Joe, his handsome, sensual face flushed, started to rise. With a queer little cry of pain, Emma turned and with heavily pounding heart stumbled blindly back to her room. . . .

A half-hour later she was sitting in her chair by the window, her hands tightly clasped, a look of dull, uncomprehending anguish on her face, when Joe, intoxicated, rushed into the room. He stood over her, sullen, defiant.

“Spying on me, were you? Well, listen here, you’re to forget what you saw! You didn’t really see it! Do you understand?”

Without speaking she looked up at him in dumb horror. There was no recognition in her eyes. Maddened, he leaned over her threateningly.

“What I do is none of your business—nobody’s business. I make my own laws. What I do is right because I do it, see? I’m the Prophet. Remember that!” He drew himself up insolently. “My business with Sister Margaret was ordered by Revelation!”

With contracting brows Emma stared at him a moment longer as if struggling to comprehend his words. Then suddenly she burst into laughter—wild, crazy laughter. There was no stopping it. Her body rocked uncontrolled, back and forth, strange, discordant sounds breaking from her throat.

“Stop it, damn you! Do you want to get the folks in here?”

The girl’s hysteria frightened him. He shook her roughly, but the laughter continued. With an angry gesture he gave her a push and she fell against the bed. He rushed from the room and

left her clinging to her chair. The laughter gradually subsided, giving place to a feverish, aching horror. It was already dusk outside and her room was dark. Her one thought was to get away—to escape from the ghastly presence in the room. Dazed, she staggered to her feet. Feeling her way cautiously and stealthily, as if to evade the demons that filled the room, she made her way from the house.

It was quite dark now and a fine mist was falling. She held her hands hard against her body, trying to press down the tearing pain within, as blindly, stumblingly, she started down the road towards Palmyra. Her breath came in little gasps of agony. She could not see for the tears. Her foot slipped on a wet rock, her ankle gave way, and with a moan she crumpled to the earth.

At that moment a vision of Jenny Vale leaping over Cascade Falls flashed through her mind. Then she felt the soft mist on her face . . . it was comforting . . . the pain melted away . . . she seemed to be floating through the air . . . perhaps this was death. . . .

They found her about midnight. At dawn she gave birth to a stillborn child. It was a girl.

Chapter Thirteen

A YEAR PASSED BEFORE EMMA FULLY RECOVERED FROM THE critical illness brought on by her accident, and even after the danger passed, she continued in a lassitude bordering on stupor. So many things had conspired to kill her that her survival seemed miraculous. The shocking discovery of Joe's infidelity, his brutal reproach to her immediately after, the mad flight ending in darkness and oblivion—these were only the beginning. Ma Smith's nostrums would have finished off one less strong—the young girl was bled by leeches and choked with oil concoctions brewed at midnight; the umbilical cord from the dead child was cut into pieces to insure her against future sterility; its tiny chemise was used to swathe her breasts to prevent soreness. It was all a horror, but she had no power to remonstrate. Mind and body, racked, endured, hoping for death.

When the fever subsided and her mind cleared, she looked about her indifferently. She watched the days come and go, each succeeding the other with a monotony as grey as that of the tick of the old clock above the mantel. June settled into July, July into August, August into September. . . .

Another autumn, in another heroic gesture, flamed across the fields and woods, then sank quietly into that year's death. But Emma, who loved the autumn above all other seasons, stared unseeingly at the bronzed maples, reddened oaks, and crimsoned sumas. She had lost all power to feel or think, and for months she lingered like a shadow, detached, unmoved by all that went on about her. . . .

When the girl baby was born dead, Ma Smith, in panic at the rank failure of Joe's prophecy concerning his first child, wanted to suppress knowledge of the facts, but the Prophet's facile imagination proved equal to the crisis. A special Revelation told him that his wife's lack of faith had brought this punishment upon her and the family. Informed of this judgment, Emma stoically replied, "If it was a girl, I'm glad it died."

But her body was young and perfect, and her spirit unquenchable. Slowly she came back to activity, to the dim knowledge that life, whatever its dark deeds, must go on. When she was strong enough to care for herself, she withdrew into an impregnable silence, which the Smiths had somehow to respect. They demanded nothing of her and she walked among them asking nothing. But she was not unaware of what went on. As from a great height she watched their ceaseless activity—the comings and goings regarding the *Book of Mormon*, its translation, its publication, the Sunday night meetings, the growth of the

Church, the weird people who made a steady stream to their door. To her they seemed like incongruous pygmies—humourless, frustrated, pathetic.

Occasionally something happened to stir her to a mild unrest—the imprecations of insistent creditors; the threats of neighbours indignant at Joe's ruthless and irresponsible schemes; the rumours of impending attacks on the family. One day Parson Eller drove out from Palmyra, bearing a message from her father. He was a kindly, grey-haired man of about sixty who had served his community for many years and was well-beloved, not only by his own flock, but by all his neighbours, whether Presbyterian, Baptist, or Quaker—whether infidel or Christian. Emma had never talked with him before, but knew that he had helped Patience Tunk in her difficulty, and that on at least one occasion he had tried to dissuade Joe from his money-digging enterprises. Ma Smith, suspicious of the Presbyterian clergyman's intentions, did not leave the room until Emma spoke to her.

“I think Parson Eller would like to see me alone.”

“Is it so important that the rest of us can't know?” Ma Smith was stubbornly insistent. “Joe doesn't hide things from his family.”

“Doesn't he?”

Emma's eyes gazed on the old woman significantly. This was the first time since she had entered the Smith house that she had dared to assert her independence. Ma Smith was shocked, but Emma's face, pale, yet determined, told her, more than the words, that she could no longer dominate the entire family. Chagrined, she withdrew from the room.

Emma's hands trembled as she opened and read her father's letter. Mr. Hale had not learned for months, and then only indirectly, of the death of the child. He had written immediately to Parson Eller, asking him to see Emma—to persuade her to return home.

“You will go, won't you, Emma?”

“I can't—now.”

“But you don't belong here,” he insisted gently. “Can't you see that you will ruin your life with these people?”

“Thank you for coming to see me, Parson Eller. I—I have decided to stay.”

The words came with great difficulty, but Parson Eller sensed their finality. He rose and, taking his leave, invited her to call on him and Mrs. Eller at the parsonage the next time she came to Palmyra. As he reached the door, he turned once more to her.

“Is there any message I may send to your father?”

Emma, faint from the effort of suppressing her feelings

through the trying interview, replied almost inaudibly, "Tell him . . . I'm very well."

The door opened and closed. Emma stood staring at the apparition of her visitor. She started to speak, "Tell father—" Suddenly, as she realized that he had gone, a cry broke from her lips. She threw herself on the bed and wept. . . .

It was days before she was able to recover her remote, cool aloofness from her perplexities. She had no desire to escape. At least the feeling that she could get away, find her way back to Harmony and security, no longer flashed out in the midst of her despair. Perhaps this was because she *felt* no great despair—because she felt *nothing* strongly. She was an onlooker in the Smith household, and only when she went out of doors did she become herself. She knew the birds, the small animals, the flowers and the trees; she was at home with them and through hours of communion she lost the awful sense of her loneliness.

Sometimes, coming back into the Smith house after such hours, she would ask herself, "What am I doing here? Why don't I go away?" A suggestion of the old fear would steal back upon her—fear of Ma Smith, of the boys, of the whole strange religion. Then she had but to tell herself that it was only the memory of a fear, of that far-away time when she thought Joe might really be all these people said he was—Seer, Magician, Devil, Prophet. Now that she had really seen him, knew him for what he really was, the old terror had utterly vanished. For Joe never again surprised in Emma's eyes that look of quivering fear from which he had run away. Her eyes now rested upon him with a clear recognition that penetrated even to Joe's well-armoured ego. He was restive under her detached, unswerving gaze. He avoided her level appraisal even when he felt drawn to her.

A curious adjustment had taken place in their relationship. They had never discussed the events of the day that had pyramided her catastrophe. The girl, Margaret, with whom Emma found him, had become a dangerous problem to the whole Mormon scheme. Her family, suspicious of Joe, threatened him. Yet Emma never betrayed by the quiver of an eyelid what she had seen that day in the wood. During excited sessions in which hysterical followers protested the Prophet's exclusively spiritual interest in his women converts, Emma sat with utter calm. That some mistook her imperturbability for defence of her husband did not ruffle her tranquil poise. At the height of a Sunday night meeting Brother Tunk climaxed his defence-eulogy of Joe by pointing dramatically to Emma and exclaiming, "Behold the Prophet's wife, calm, secure in her trust and confidence in her honoured but persecuted husband. Could one

find a surer exoneration from such vile accusations than the face of his beloved and trusting wife?"

Emma listened in dead quiet to these grotesque words. She felt Joe's uneasy eyes upon her and deliberately turned her own upon him. He turned shamefacedly away, and she felt surprise at the twinges of pity that stirred within her.

Although it was not expressed in words, she and Joe reached a tacit understanding concerning all the important things that separated yet held them together. She did not betray him to his enemies; he respected her desire to be left alone. Secure in her silence he went his way. But he could no longer go to her in the darkness of the night, find her waiting, warm and eager for his embrace. During the year following her illness, he had not dared approach her. Exiled from their room during her convalescence, when his mother would have sent him back, he delayed.

"But it ain't right or natural," the old woman insisted, looking expectantly at Emma, who gave no sign that she heard.

"The Lord's business comes first, Ma. I've been instructed by the Angel to keep myself celibate till the *Book's* published."

Ma Smith subsided, having no arguments to combat that irrefutable one. Emma merely looked at him, long and curiously, and his eyes were the first to turn away.

This banishment was not easy for Emma. There were sleepless nights when she tossed restlessly across the broad expanse of Grandmother Hale's bed. "Why am I here? . . . Why do I stay? . . . What is this waiting for?" But she either could not or would not answer these questions.

Joe at this time was absorbed in seeing the manuscript of the *Book of Mormon* through the press. The task was finally accomplished, but only after many vicissitudes. Having weathered the storms of translation and having extracted from Hezekiah the money for publication, Joe expected smooth sailing. But he had difficulty in finding a printer who was "willing to touch the stuff." Editor Grandin, of the *Palmyra Sentinel*, told him quite frankly, "There isn't enough money in the world to persuade me to take it." Joe met this rebuff with a shrug, charged it to the community prejudice against him, and utilized it in the next Sunday meeting as another example of the persecutions from which the new faith was continually suffering. He begged his followers to remember that no Prophet is honoured in his own community.

He then sent Hezekiah to Thurlow Weed, publisher of the *Rochester Inquirer*. After reading a few chapters, Mr. Weed returned the manuscript, saying, "Mr. Tunk, this is the queerest mess of senseless jargon I ever looked at. If you value your good

name, I advise you not to mortgage your farm and beggar your family."

Hezekiah flew into a towering rage and went to a publisher who had no such scruples about the nature of the books he turned out, so long as they were paid for. Tunk signed a contract for the printing of five thousand copies, giving a mortgage on his farm as security.

And so the printing began. Many stories circulated concerning the condition of the manuscript. The typesetters openly rebelled at the task assigned to them—the grammar, spelling, punctuation, and writing were scarcely superior to those of a child; there were no paragraphs, no capitals, no organization. At first Joe would not permit one change to be made, but finally was prevailed upon to allow the printers to bring some semblance of order out of the chaos. At length, on December 25, 1828—Joe's twenty-third birthday—the books were released. A jubilee meeting was held that evening, and the first copies, autographed by "The Lord's Servant, Joseph Smith," were sold to the faithful.

With the publication of the *Mormon Bible* the formal organization of the church took place. Having a new religion and a new Bible, quite naturally there must be priests to carry out the work of the church. A Revelation at this time informed Joseph that "Unto you and Hezekiah I confer the Priesthood of Mormon, which gives to you the power of baptism and laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. I command you to baptize Hezekiah, and you in turn to submit yourself to him for baptism."

Another Revelation followed commanding the Prophet to appoint various officers—Apostles, Elders, Priests, Teachers, and the like. The Apostles constituted the governing board and at this time included Hyram Smith (Joseph's brother), Hezekiah Tunk, Sidney Rigdon, Arnold Piatt—a local music teacher much given to visions—and Ebenezer Hurlbutt, sometime tin peddler, harness-maker, and pedagogue, who had been an early convert to Joe's money-digging enterprises and a firm believer in witchcraft and the miraculous generally.

The Gift of Revelation and Healing by Faith particularly appealed to the newly-appointed Apostles. Hezekiah had been promised this power by Joe when he agreed to finance the publication of the Bible. Already, however, he had become a source of great annoyance to the Prophet. He would call public meetings on his own account and address the listeners with great enthusiasm, declaring that God, through the Mormons, would soon rule the world, that the millennium was at hand, that another President of the United States would never be elected after John Quincy Adams' term, and that all temporal

and spiritual power beyond the confines of heaven was about to pass into the hands of the Mormons. Apostles Tunk, Piatt, and Hurlbutt had already discovered their own peek-stones and were administering blessings through Revelation on their converts. The Prophet, alarmed by this sudden show of rivalry, took recourse to a particularly vivid Revelation which informed him that he alone was appointed "Seer, Translator, and Revelator ; that Prophet Joseph shall alone receive My word as if from Mine own mouth."

Hezekiah, usually docile, was childishly insistent on his right, and Prophet Joseph found it expedient to discipline him by sending him into Ohio to proselytize among the Indians. This clinched the matter. Prophet Joseph's authority was then and for ever established.

At this time Joe's father was elevated to the office of Patriarch and sent through the surrounding territory to drum up trade for the new Bible. He was permitted to accept farm produce and merchandise in payment if cash could not be secured. The Bible, however, neither sold nor traded well. Once when the old man was suffering the indignity of one of his numerous arrests for debt, he offered seven Bibles in settlement of a bill for \$4.32, and the creditor, knowing him to be penniless, accepted the offer as a joke.

In the days immediately following the organization, pains were taken by the Prophet and his followers, not only to spread abroad the news of the wonderful Revelation, but to build up a membership worthy of the glory of the new Zion. They invited their relatives and friends to join the church, and by the end of January about fifty had flocked to the Prophet's standard. They were immersed in the wintry waters of Sandy Creek. Each bought a Mormon Bible, and each was made the subject of a special Revelation.

Many of the new converts were dispatched as missionaries through neighbouring states. Without scrip or purse they travelled, two by two, proclaiming the wonders of the boy Prophet and his Golden Book. One of these pairs, beating its way some five thousand miles through the Seaboard States, brought over one hundred converts into the Mormon Church. It was not long until the new religion with its "glad tidings of the great awakening" had spread into the remotest sections.

There was nothing in the rise of a new sect to arouse the hostility of the orthodox. New religions, new prophecies, new prophets sprang up like mushrooms in the backwoods settlements, only to die almost as suddenly as they made their appearance. But from the very beginning the Mormons excited bitter animosities which rapidly grew into an open hostility. The feverish enthusiasm and arrogant aggression of many of the

leaders of the Church in proselytizing aroused the active opposition of the communities in which they worked. Two of their beliefs were particularly obnoxious to the anti-Mormons: first, "as the name *Mormon* means *more good*, so the Mormons, alone perfect in the eye of the Lord, possess the earth and the fruit thereof;" secondly, that Prophets, particularly one, as in the days of old, still walk the earth, revealing through visions and miracles the true word of God to those who repent and have faith. Already in Palmyra a group of resentful citizens, fearful of the rising power of the Mormons, had proclaimed themselves "enemies of the Shouting Smiths." . . .

Emma saw little of Joe during the months that followed. She sat by the window content to idle away hour after hour, day after day, her mind dwelling on no topic for any length of time. She watched Joe's movements with remote indifference, as if he were a stranger.

This state of affairs continued until Sidney Rigdon, caught in a late winter blizzard, spent the night at the Smiths'. Across the evening table Emma studied the frail, nervous man with wonder—wonder that *he* could be interested in *Revelations* and *Golden Plates*. His sensitive perception of things unspoken, his refined, scholarly bearing, his gentle manner, clashed incongruously with the professional Mormon pose he seemed to affect. There were moments as she looked on the rigorous, austere lines of his face when he reminded her of her father. Certainly he had little to share with the Smiths. Emma's feelings were perplexingly confused. She dimly sensed qualities in him which aroused both respect and pity. And because Sidney Rigdon did not seem unaware of these contradictions, because he did not seem to understand himself, Emma somehow felt sorry for him. At the same time she suspected that his influence on Joe was responsible for the inception of the Church of Mormon.

The next morning Emma, on her walk, was reflecting on these curiously involved feelings when she suddenly came upon Rigdon hurrying towards her around a turn in the road. She was not deceived by his show of surprise—his pretended accidentalness of the encounter.

"I thought you had returned to Palmyra, Mr. Rigdon."

"I'm going—this afternoon."

When she would have passed him, he turned. "May I walk a way with you, Sister Emma?"

As they started down the road together, all of her old suspicions of the dark, quiet man came back and encased her in a forbidding silence. Rigdon laid his hand on her arm.

"Sit here on this log and let us talk, Sister Emma."

She did as he requested, but with evident distaste.

"Why do you hate me so? We should be friends." He said

the words significantly, leaning towards her, compelling her eyes.

“Why?” She regarded him noncommittally.

“Because we speak the same language—because our interests are the same.”

Ignoring this, she demanded irrelevantly, “What are you doing here—in Palmyra?”

“Why . . . why, that seems a needless question. You know what my business is here.”

“No, I don’t. What is your business here?”

“To prosper your husband’s work—the Lord’s work.” He lapsed into the Mormon vernacular.

“Mr. Rigdon, tell me the truth.” Emma leaned towards him, scanning his ascetic face carefully and speaking tensely. “You are not like the others. You don’t belong here. What is your interest in this new religion? What have you to do with my husband?”

They looked full at each other. A light quivered in his eyes, seemed about to break through, then faded away and the eyes narrowed as he spoke with conventional fervour: “I am sorry you mistrust the sincerity of the Prophet’s converts. It is doubly sad that such questions should come from his wife, one chosen by divine guidance.”

Emma interrupted him with a deep sigh and started to rise. He placed a detaining hand on her arm.

“Sister Emma, you sin grievously in barring your husband from your inner chamber.”

“What right have you——” she began indignantly.

“The right of your husband’s friend, and of your friend, if you would allow me,” he added gently. “You are his wife, aren’t you?”

“Yes, but——”

“You love him, don’t you?”

“But you don’t know.” Emma’s poise was broken. She hesitated.

“I know everything,” he said meaningfully. “But you have stayed on. You did not leave, go back to your parents. If you do not intend to be a wife to the Prophet, why are you here?”

Emma stared at him, flushing. No words came. Rigdon leaned towards her and spoke forcefully: “I’ll answer that question, Sister Emma. You are here because you love Prophet Joe—because you know that regardless of what he has done he is your husband—that you do care. Isn’t that true?”

She could not drag her eyes away from his. She answered in a low, hesitant voice, “Yes, perhaps it is.” She was not angry. What he said was true. He had answered the question she had not dared answer for herself. Rigdon continued, diplomatically:

"You were wise to stay, Sister Emma. Your decision will be justified a thousandfold. Your husband has unbounded magnetic powers. He will achieve great leadership. You may not believe or sympathize completely with all of his doctrines and methods, but I speak honestly when I tell you that I see a great and powerful future ahead of him."

Emma looked up amazed at the light in the man's eyes. "Your husband has rare genius for compelling people to follow him, but he needs direction—control. I am here to serve these needs. He also requires affection—love. His nature is a passionate one. You, as his wife, should serve him there. Overlook mistakes. Be his wife; keep the others out. It is most important, just now especially, that he should be humoured and protected. We must do our part, Sister Emma, and I promise you that you will be repaid—that you will not be sorry. Will you receive him again?"

"Yes."

She was ashamed at the joy that followed the utterance of the simple word.

"That is good. You are a wise and sensible woman."

He shook her hand, then tactfully left her sitting upon a log beside the road that led on into Palmyra and across the hills towards Harmony. . . .

Joe had gone to Palmyra with Ridgon and had not come home until the end of the week. On the night of his return he came to her room and silently, masked by the darkness, he took her. But there was a difference. The old unquestioning yielding was gone. She could give with a passion as fierce, as enveloping, as his, but afterwards, when he sank into deep sleep, she lay quietly, looking into the future. . . .

Chapter Fourteen

THE PROPHET AND HIS APOSTLES PUT FORTH EVERY EFFORT TO make the first great mass meeting, publicly proclaiming the formal organization of the Church of Mormon, a magnificent success. Local prejudice ran so high, however, that they were unable to secure the hall in Palmyra. The meeting was announced to take place in Alcock's Grove, a natural amphitheatre surrounded by a forest of wide-spreading beech trees, a few miles from the village. Handbills heralding the event were circulated throughout the county, but the word-of-mouth publicity, as well as the hostility of the Prophet's enemies, had already insured a large audience.

The meeting was held on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in September. By two o'clock over a thousand spectators gathered in the grove. Some brought their entire families in large wooden wagons; others came on foot or horseback. Those from a distance carried their lunches and sat about the grounds eating in picnic fashion. Of the thousand, there were a hundred converts, a small sprinkling of the critically minded, and a substantial group of hecklers; but by far the great mass was made up of the idly curious who were drawn by the wild tales of Joe's scandalous career. Some were attracted by stories of his prowess with the peek-stone—they had come to see the gold-digger and miracle-worker; others, and among these many women, were brought by the whispered stories of his fatal fascination for certain sisters of the community.

Already he had become a semi-legendary figure, by some denounced as a vagabond, dead-beat, ignoramus, illiterate dunce, numb-skull, blustering rake, fanatic, lying charlatan, scheming impostor, wife-beater, crazy diviner, conjurer, devil exorcist, instrument of hell, and seducer of young girls; by others, hailed as the Miracle Worker, Divine Healer, Archangel, Messenger of God, Saint, Shining One, Oracle, Chosen of God, High Priest, Clairvoyant, Interpreter, Prophet, Seer, and Holy Revelator.

It was with this jumble of nebulous and contradictory impressions that the audience grew quiet and focused its attention on the crudely constructed platform, as Joseph Smith, Prophet of the Lord, accompanied by the mysterious stranger, made his way to the pulpit. Following them, the Apostles clambered on to the platform and solemnly ranged themselves in a stiff and awkward semicircle about the Prophet and his friend.

To one seeing Joseph for the first time, it would be difficult to give credence either to the diabolical or saintly appellations so

freely bestowed upon him. He was an arresting figure, handsome in an obvious way. His large, bland features ; his long, aquiline nose, retreating forehead, full mouth, and unsteady greenish eyes, standing out prominently upon a light complexion ; his leonine head, with its ruddy, abundant mass of auburn hair, made him a figure to draw attention in any assembly, but hardly distinguished him as either saint or devil. Except for rumours, one would have thought him an attractively rugged and stalwart fellow, little given to speculations on matters mystical. He had improved his bearing and dress in the last few months. Although his frock coat shrieked its newness, he wore it with the easy bravado that marked all of his innovations. He was aware that he was the cynosure of a thousand pairs of eyes, but did not shrink from the task before him.

The presence of the mysterious stranger at his side occasioned a ripple of whispered comment: "Who is that man? . . . What's he doing here? . . . Isn't he the one who's been staying at the inn? . . . They say he's been working with Joe on the new Bible. . . ."

Their curiosity was given greater impetus when Prophet Joseph arose and without preamble began to speak in his suavest and most assured manner:

"My friends, brothers and sisters in the Lord, we are met here to-day for the purpose of worshipping God in the light of His latest Revelation. Although I was but the humble instrument through which the new and only faith was brought into the world, it has been revealed to me that another should make the important address on this great and auspicious occasion. He was divinely led to this spot and has served God meekly, without desire for recognition or personal glory, throughout the arduous task of translating and publishing our new Bible—the Holy, Mystic *Book of Mormon*. This man of God is a scholar, master of many languages, and versed in the history of all the religions of the world. For years he was a brilliant preacher in one of the old, but mistaken, faiths. For years he has been troubled by the imperfections of his faith. And it was God's providence which led him here to Palmyra to throw in his lot with us. Concerning him, a Revelation has come unto me, saying :

" 'Listen to the voice of the Lord your God ; I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the same to-day as yesterday and for ever. Behold, verily, verily, I say unto My servant, Sidney Rigdon, that I have looked upon thee and thy works ; I have heard thy prayers, and prepared thee for a greater work—thou art blessed, for thou shalt do great deeds. And a commandment I give unto thee that thou shalt tarry with the Prophet Joseph and journey with him, wheresoe'er he goeth, to help him

as he shall cast out devils, heal the sick, cause the blind to receive light, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk. Keep all My commandments and I will cause the Heavens to shake for thy good. Satan shall tremble, Zion shall rejoice upon the hills, and Israel shall be saved for My children. Lift up your hearts and be glad, for your redemption is nigh! Behold, I come quickly, even so. Amen!

"It is altogether fitting, brothers and sisters, that the Lord should have chosen Apostle Rigdon," Joe turned to the converted Sidney with a grandiloquent gesture, "to be the first trumpet to proclaim the dawn of the new day."

Rigdon rose, bowed deeply to the Prophet, and walked with starched dignity to the speaker's stand. He stood in marked contrast to Joe. Although himself a personable man, his commendable qualities were more subtle than those of the Prophet. Smallish, a trifle stooped, his long, thin face always carried a little to one side as if he were listening, he could not compete for popular approval with the Prophet, but there was something about his sharp, penetrating eyes, his nervous gesticulations, and his austere manner that aroused the interest of the close observer. Whereas Joe's characteristics were quickly apparent, this man's were somewhat mystifying and required study for detection.

As he came forward to the pulpit, the audience stirred restlessly, disappointed. But the professorial-looking man had not spoken five minutes until he held them spell-bound:

"Brothers and sisters, I come to you as the messenger of God. I stand here to-day because I am commanded to proclaim to you the wonders and marvels of the Revelation of Mormon. Let us bow our heads in prayer."

He closed his eyes, raised both arms to heaven, and with professional poise waited until complete stillness settled on the audience. He prayed long and earnestly. It was almost as if he were orating to God, and the people with bowed heads, hung on every word. They had never before felt themselves so intimately and personally in communication with their Heavenly Father, nor had they ever before realized so poignantly the calamitous nature of their sins and the imminent peril of the Day of Judgment. They were more sympathetic to the Church of Mormon when Rigdon at last rose to a passionate peroration:

"Most beneficent God, we are here to extol Thee, to give grateful praise to Thy bounteous dispensation so recently bestowed upon a dying, evil world. We thank Thee for a renewal of Thy power of miracles. We thank Thee for the gift of Revelation. With deep humility and awed hearts, we acknowledge the gifts of Thy servant, the chosen Revelator, Brother, Apostle, Prophet, Joseph Smith. We beseech Thy blessing on him and

on those who come here to-day in a spirit of faith, seeking to know Thy will. And we pray for protection against all scoffers and enemies, whose presence here is inimical to the work of Thy Kingdom on earth. We pray for victory over the hosts of sin and the designs of the devil. In the name of the Father, the Prophet, and the *Book of Mormon*, Amen!"

There was a hushed quiet throughout the assembly. Here was a new type of orator—one whose passionate flow of words and whose intense earnestness commanded respectful attention even from the scoffers. The sermon that followed, expounding the doctrines of Mormon, was given in a steady, mellifluous flow of language, which they recognized as English, but which they were at a loss to comprehend. The ideas, delivered in a Boston accent, were woven into a steady stream of dramatic oratory by this small, frail man, whose aggressive vigour amazed them with its unslackened power even at the end of a two-hour discourse. The argument was interspersed with a generous and facile use of quotations—Biblical, classical, Mormonistic—quotations which bulwarked and substantiated the learned thesis.

Although they did not understand the scholarly argument, they were convinced. Occasionally a few ideas reached them. They grasped the meaning of the orator's vehement assertions that the *Book of Mormon*, which he held aloft in the long, nervous fingers of his right hand, while it did not displace the Bible of the Scriptures, was nevertheless just as holy and just as inspired. They gathered also that Mormonism would soon displace all other religions and take possession of the earth. And there was no confusion in their minds concerning the injunction to pay obeisance to the Prophet Joseph, get themselves baptized, buy a copy of the *Book of Mormon*, and thus prepare for the Day of Judgment and their souls' eternal salvation.

The call for converts followed. As Rigdon moved nervously from one side of the platform to the other, one of the Apostles jumped to his feet and led in the singing of "Almost Persuaded." As they began the final stanza, Rigdon's voice rose higher and higher above the music, his pleas ever more threatening and vehement. Slowly at first, then in an excitement close to a stampede, the converted flocked down the aisle to fall on their knees in front of the platform. As the singers came to the last phrase of the last stanza, "Almost persuaded—but lost," Rigdon stopped them after "almost persuaded" to make one final plea:

"My friends, God is calling to you. Let us not sing those last two words until all have made up their minds once and for ever. There is yet time. Humble yourselves before Him, put your pride behind you, acknowledge your sins, and ye shall be made

whiter than snow. Think what joy, what eternal happiness, lies before you. All your troubles shall disappear; you shall no longer suffer from sickness and dire diseases; you shall no longer writhe with the tortures of the damned; you shall rise into the ranks of the mighty and powerful. . . . ”

An old man, leaning heavily on a cane, limped awkwardly forward. As he neared the front he suddenly hesitated, threw his crutch into the air, and, shouting, “I’m cured! I’m cured!” ran down to the kneeling group and flung himself hysterically into their midst.

Rigdon had worked himself into a frenzy and his mood was infectious. Others flocked to the front until there were hardly more than a few hundred remaining in their seats. The song was finished. Rigdon again prayed long and eloquently, beseeching God to have mercy on the “lost,” thanking Him for the miracle He had that day performed, and begging His blessing on those who had confessed the error of their ways in seeking the light of the new faith.

The great assembly broke up and followed the new converts down the ravine to Crooked Creek, where they were to be baptized. In the meantime a large mob of armed men, sullen and resentful of Joe’s activities in the community, had collected on the outskirts of the grove and now began to threaten the Prophet. They shouted accusations of robbery, swindling, and immorality at him, and started to break up the ceremony. Facing them with undaunted courage, Joe made them listen to him against their will. He met their antagonism boldly by frankly admitting that he had once led an improper and immoral life.

“But that,” he added, “was before I saw the Light, before I was converted to the only true religion.” He tactfully reminded them of the early struggles and persecutions of the Disciples, and, appealing to their honour and their own religions, he besought them, in the name of God, to suspend judgment until they had fully tested the truth of the new doctrine. His stirring plea aroused his followers to greater heights of fervour, and they shouted out their enthusiasm in words that resounded through the woods.

The mob paused, listened, hesitated. The young man’s power could not be denied. Seizing the advantage this climactic moment gave him, the Prophet raised his long arms aloft and began to pray. His persecutors shamefacedly bowed their heads. From that hour the Prophet’s position was established and from that hour began the historic rise of the Church of Mormon.

Chapter Fifteen

THAT EVENING JOE AND RIGDON AGAIN SAT IN THE ROOM OF the White Horse Inn. Exultant over the day's triumph, they were relaxing—Joe with a bottle of whisky, Rigdon with a glass of port. Between them flowed an air of camaraderie, growing out of a perfect understanding and satisfaction with each other. Pouring "three fingers" into his glass from the freshly opened bottle, Joe spoke in an expansive tone:

"Well, we certainly did put it across. Five hundred converts! Whew! I never expected so many! Your speech got 'em, Rigdon. You're the finest orator I ever heard and you sure can write up my Revelations."

Joe looked at Sidney with frank and envious admiration.

"Yes, the day did go well. Our plans have certainly been blessed. You carried out the programme with amazing skill. I congratulate you."

Rigdon spoke slowly and judiciously. If there was a touch of condescension in his tone, Joe failed to notice it as he went on generously: "Couldn't have managed it without you. Your coming to Palmyra that Sunday night certainly was a god-send. . . . You never did tell me how you happened to be there."

"Just on my way back to Boston from Ohio . . ." he answered evasively and volunteered no more.

But Joe was in a warmly reminiscent mood, quite himself as, forgetting the rôle of Prophet, he rambled naïvely on.

"Talk about miracles! I sure felt one had happened when you came forward that Sunday night out at the farm. Remember what you said to me?"

"Why, no, I think I've forgotten." Rigdon smiled at the boy tolerantly.

"Well, you said, 'You've hidden your light under a bushel. Come with me and I'll show you how to make it shine before multitudes.' "

"Was that it?"

"Yes, that was it . . . that's what you said . . . and we sure have," Joe said exultantly.

"This is only the beginning. If we work carefully there is no telling how far this might go."

"You're right. Together we can conquer the world. With my Revelations and your education we can build up an Empire—for the Lord," he added, as an afterthought.

Rigdon's eyes narrowed. "Yes, the Lord has promised that His chosen shall inherit the earth, but we must remember the command, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to

every creature.' There's work ahead of us, and we've no time to lose," he finished brusquely.

"And to think," Joe went on undeterred as he poured another "three fingers" into his glass, "to think that all those years you were digging in those Indian mounds and writing that history, you had no idea that I was alive and digging for buried treasure and getting Revelations from the Lord, and that we'd get together and found a new religion!"

"We must forget the past and lose ourselves in the work before us." He spoke abruptly, as if eager to conclude this theme.

There was a sharp knock on the door, and, after Joe's loud "Come in," the door opened and Parson Eller entered the room. With an abrupt "Good evening, gentlemen," he strode to the table in a manner indicating that he had not come for a social call. His usually gentle and kindly face was set as he stood before the two men with the air of one bound on distasteful business. Rigdon had never met him, but knew him by reputation. Both men at the table rose as he came towards them.

"I've come to see you on a matter of grave importance. I hope you can spare me a few moments?"

"Won't you sit down, Parson?" Rigdon motioned him to a chair.

"No, thanks, my errand won't take long." Leaning across the table, he addressed himself to Rigdon, slowly and distinctly enunciating each word, "Mr. Rigdon, *where is the Spaulding manuscript?*"

Rigdon turned pale, but almost immediately recovered himself as he replied defiantly.

"Why should you ask me that question?"

"Because you're the only man that can answer it."

"I . . . I don't understand you." Rigdon's poise was shaken. Turning to Joe, he said, "If you'll just wait for me down-stairs——"

"Don't go, Mr. Smith," Parson Eller interrupted. "This matter concerns you too."

"Concerns me?" Joe was mystified.

"Yes. Let us be frank, gentlemen. I have come to you in all kindness and have no desire or intention to quarrel with you. Quite naturally I have not been in sympathy with your activities in the community and have made it a point to inform myself on all that you have been doing. I read your new Bible after it was published and took the trouble to investigate its origin."

"Listen here, Parson Eller, I can explain all that. There's no need to bring Smith into this."

"What do you mean?" Joe demanded of Parson Eller.

"I mean that this Bible is taken from the Spaulding manuscript."

"Spaulding? Who's he?" Joe asked in complete confusion.

Parson Eller, ostensibly addressing Joe, in reality flung his words accusingly at Rigdon in curt, incisive tones.

"Mr. Solomon Spaulding was a student at Dartmouth. He was there in my undergraduate days. Later, he spent considerable time studying the Indian mounds of Ohio and wrote many scholarly articles about his researches. In his leisure time he had written a fanciful story purporting to show that the Indians are descendants of the lost tribe of Israel. The story was never published—that is, until your Bible appeared. The manuscript was in the hands of a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, printer for several years, and during that time Mr. Rigdon was employed in this printer's shop."

"But Rigdon wrote our manuscript," Joe, caught off guard, exploded. "He's an archaeologist."

"We haven't any manuscript," Rigdon quickly cut in. "His insinuations are absolutely false. He couldn't prove a word of it."

"No, not since you got the manuscript from Spaulding's widow. But there are a dozen people at least who read that manuscript and would be glad to testify to the resemblance."

Joe was suddenly sober and turned to Rigdon. "What does all this mean, anyhow?"

Parson Eller interrupted, looking pityingly at Joe:

"So, he's duped even you?" Turning his back on Rigdon, he addressed himself solely to Joe. "Young man, let this be a warning to you. Your so-called *Book of Mormon*, quite apart from its plagiarism of the Bible and the Spaulding manuscript, can get you into a lot of trouble. I have told no one what I know, and if you will give up your nefarious schemes in this community, if you'll stop deceiving and ruining innocent people who don't know any better, I'll go no further with the matter."

"Give up our Bible . . . our Church?" Joe grew weak as he considered such a possibility—the loss of his power, his glory; the wreck of all his dreams for a great Empire.

"Yes. Why not turn your talent to some useful end? Why not help people instead of ruining them?" Parson Eller pleaded, thinking that Joe was vacillating.

"I'll be damned if we will! We've got a new religion and we've just as much right to preach as you have. Spaulding? I never heard of him."

"No, and neither has he," Rigdon broke in. "The trouble with you preachers is that you can't stand to have anyone else doing a better job than you're doing."

"I might more truthfully fling those words at you, Sidney Rigdon!" Eller spoke with some contempt. "I know your

story. Why did you leave the Christian church in which you were a respected and honoured leader? Why did you thus treacherously betray the Faith? Why have you broken with those who trusted you?"

Parson Eller's voice rose with passion. When Rigdon, white with anger, would have spoken, his accuser, pointing a warning finger, went on: "I'll answer those questions! You are cursed with envy—you are eaten with pride—your ambition will destroy you!"

As the two men glared at each other, Joe impatiently broke in: "Those dirty Campbellites double-crossed Rigdon! We've got a religion that'll beat theirs all hollow!"

Ignoring Joe, Eller appealed to the sullen Sidney Rigdon: "How can a man of your character and great gifts stoop to such low methods for revenge?"

From Rigdon's thin, tight-lipped face came words cold and hard: "Who are you to judge another's motives? The human heart is an inscrutable mystery. To you—who doubtless mean well—I can only say that I believe in the ultimate power for good in our new religion. What matter the means, if the end be good?"

Again Joe broke in belligerently: "Hey! What's this got to do with our new Bible?"

"Gentlemen, Mr. Spaulding wrote a good yarn. You've garbled it into a jumble of impious and irreligious notions. But I'm less concerned with your Bible than I am with the harm you are doing to people. You have absolutely no scruples in foisting your money schemes on an unsuspecting public. Woe unto the hypocrite! You may delude some poor wretches, but I tell you, as there is a just God in heaven, you'll come to no good end." There was silence for a moment. Then, "Well, gentlemen, what do you say?"

"I don't believe a word of what you've said. We're ready to fight, if that's what you want, eh, Rigdon?" Joe, in spite of his bravado, was bewildered, and turned to his companion for assurance.

"The truth always wins out," Rigdon replied evasively.

"There is more wisdom in those words than you perhaps realize," Parson Eller added in prophetic irony. Then his tone changed and a tremor of anger entered his voice. "Since you don't realize the evil of your blasphemous and irresponsible schemes, this community will have to teach you. You'll hear more about this matter."

He left the room as abruptly as he had entered. The two men stared at the slammed door for a moment, then turned reluctantly to face each other. Joe had passed through surprise, incredulity, fear, and indignation during this "Revelation."

There was a bit of all these emotions in his voice as he turned to Rigdon.

“Did you really steal that manuscript?”

Rigdon measured the younger man with level, coolly calculating eyes. After a pause he countered in a meaningful tone:

“Did you really find the Golden Plates?”

Chapter Sixteen

ONE DAY IN LATE DECEMBER OF THE FOLLOWING YEAR, TWO farmers met on the street in front of the *Palmyra Sentinel*. Old friends, they stopped to pass the time of day, and soon were engaged in a conversation typical of many taking place in the community at this time.

“And hev ye heerd the nooze, Bill?”

“Bout Prophet Joe?”

“Got ‘im in jail yesterday.”

“They shoulda locked ‘im up long ago fer this. He’s gone too fer with his plagued peekin’.”

“Yep. Fella like ‘im ain’t much ‘count. The whole family’s worse than a hornet’s nest, and nothin’ shorta jailin’ ‘em ‘ll rid us of their crazy doin’s.”

“How’d they finally git ‘im?”

“Parson Eller, they say, advised Si Treadwell to swear out a writ on accounta the daughter. But that’s only the beginnin’. Wunst they gits him on the stand, there’ll be plentya charges preferred.”

“I’d think ol’ Si ‘ud be plenty hot on accounta Margaret. They say she’s gone plumb daft.”

“Yeh, and she was a nice girl—till she got mixed up with Joe Smith.”

“I heerd she run away from home t’other Sunday and they didn’t locate her fer a coupla days.”

“Parson Eller found her over to the Smiths. ‘Peers like she’d been attendin’ their crazy meetin’s.”

“Can’t understand what the women-folks sees in that big blather-skite.”

“Wal, guess ef all the things we hear be true, there’ll be others ud feel safer fer their women-folks ef they’d run ‘im outa these parts.”

“I reckon they’ll be doin’ it one a these days. Si woulda done it ‘fore this, but Parson Eller got ‘im to agree to a trial. If he’s acquitted, it’ll be purty dangerous ‘round here for ‘im.”

“They got plenty on ‘im, all right. The way he walked off with Jeb Williams’ horses and wagon! Jes plain stole ‘em. Jeb was mighty sore ‘bout it at first, but Joe says he’d jest had a Revelation or somethin’ to take the critters. Would ya believe it, they was afeerd to git ‘im arrested? And that dern fool Prophet’s been usin’ them horses ever since.”

“I heerd the Williamses joined up with the new religion.”

“Yep. I ‘low Joe’s the only feller I ever knew who kin steal from folks and make ‘em think it’s fer their own good.”

“Wal, people’s been afeerd of ‘im. They’re a nasty bunch

to deal with. Wouldn't stop shorta shootin' when he gits mad."

"Ef they don't clap 'im in jail and keep 'im there, it's sartin shore decent folks has got to git together and drive 'em out right smart. There's plentya land out West for sich as them."

"Here comes the Parson now. Goin' into the *Sentinel* office. I'm right glad that paper's got the guts to tell the truth about those muckers."

"I'll be thar when the time comes fer to git 'em outa here."

"Me too. . . . Wal, guess I'd better be movin' on. See ya at the trial to-morrow."

"Better be airyly ef ya want a seat."

The two farmers sauntered off in opposite directions.

Inside the office of the *Sentinel*, Editor Egbert Grandin greeted his friend.

"Well, well, John. Congratulations. Took a lot of courage to put Joe in jail."

"It took a good deal more than courage. I didn't want to do it. He's a likeable enough fellow, fanatical and arrogant perhaps, but attractive in many ways."

"There's no need to sympathize with him. His irresponsibility has become a menace to the community. By the way, have you found out any more about Rigdon?"

"We can't do much there, I'm afraid. I am absolutely convinced that this so-called *Book of Mormon* is plagiarized from the Spaulding manuscript, but there was only one copy and Rigdon's got that. We couldn't prove anything in court."

"I can't make head nor tail of it."

"There isn't anything to be made of it. It attacks all existing churches by establishing another. The book itself is a conglomeration of Spaulding's wild stories about the American Indians, and whole passages stolen almost literally from the Bible. But they've left out all that is finest in the stories of the old Patriarchs and neglected what is most spiritual in the New Testament. It is absolutely lacking in Christian charity."

"But all new religions have to start some time, John, and you, yourself, have always preached tolerance."

"I'm not opposed to a new religion. I've always been sympathetic to the Harmonists in Pennsylvania, the Wallingfords in Connecticut, and the Campbellites in our own section. But the leaders and members of these sects were decent people who lived peacefully and honestly with their neighbours."

"I don't understand how Sidney Rigdon got mixed up in this business. He seems like an intelligent fellow."

"Rigdon is a strange person—difficult to understand. I doubt if he understands himself. He might have been a great man. He's a scholar and a gentleman. There's no one in America

more learned in biblical literature and the history of the world than Rigdon."

"How do you explain his friendship for such an ignoramus as Joe Smith?"

"Ambition. That has been and will be his ruin. He got the idea that he should be at the head of some religion, left the Baptists because they wouldn't support his unorthodox beliefs, and quarrelled with the Campbellites because he couldn't dominate their Church."

"But he can't get anywhere with this Revelation business."

"I'm not so sure. I think Rigdon is using Joe to start the religion and expects to get rid of him or use him for his own purposes eventually."

"He has a lot of influence over people—one of the finest orators I ever heard—but he'll find Joe a hard nut to crack."

"Well, whatever happens, I'm afraid Rigdon is doomed to disappointment. His inordinate desire for power will destroy him."

"By the way, is Si Treadwell willing to take the stand against Joe?"

"Yes, but we're counting on his daughter's testimony to prove our case. There are many petty accusations, but they're difficult to sustain with actual evidence."

"How is the girl? Have you seen her lately?"

"I talked with her yesterday. Seems quieter. Says she'll testify, but it's an awful thing to submit the Treadwells to. It's already broken the mother."

"Do you think the worst has happened—I mean about the girl?"

"I'm afraid so. I've never known such a complete change in anyone. Joe seems to have bewitched her. She was a natural, happy little girl, a bit shy perhaps, until she began to attend those Sunday night orgies at the Smiths'. She was converted and baptized—the rest is common gossip."

"It seems incredible that a modest, sensible girl could have been taken in by such a charlatan. The affair's been going on now for some years. How do you account for the girl's recent spells?"

"I heard that Joe is trying to get rid of her. At times she seems almost out of her senses."

"I'm surprised Joe's wife stood for it. She's not of his breed."

Parson Eller hesitated a moment before replying, "I don't fully understand it myself. She wouldn't return to Harmony."

"What did you write the father?"

"What could I write? My mission had failed, and I didn't dare tell that broken-hearted old man all I felt about the situation."

"Didn't Hale know what a scoundrel Smith is?"

"Yes. That's what makes it so hard for him to bear this. It seems that he was instrumental in organizing an opposition to run Joe out of town."

"Out of Harmony? On what grounds?"

"Partly his fraudulent money-digging schemes. But the climax came over a young girl, Jenny Vale, he was said to have seduced. She committed suicide a week after Joe's elopement."

"God Almighty! What kind of a creature is this self-styled Prophet? And they say in the last year he's got hundreds of converts. People like to be duped. Sober reason means nothing. I am more and more amazed at the depths of folly, degradation, and superstition to which human nature descends. And the more obvious the imposture, the stronger become its advocates. Remember what Bassanio said,

In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament."

Parson Eller smiled tolerantly at his friend's vehemence, and, together, they talked through their plans for the trial of the Prophet.

Almost at this very hour Sidney Rigdon, nervous and excited, was talking with Emma.

"You may have to testify to-morrow."

"Testify? To what?"

"To your husband's character—his innocence."

"Regarding Sister Margaret?" Her tone was cryptic.

"Yes, of course—the other charges amount to nothing."

"But wouldn't that be what you call—perjury?"

"Sister Emma, you must forget that word. My God, do you know what is at stake?"

Sidney, in his excitement, forgot to be sanctimonious. His face flamed with agitation as he went on: "We are ready now to branch out—to begin in earnest. Our Bible has sold well. We shall go West, get away to new territory where we shall not be persecuted—where people are avid, hungry for the new religion. We already have Apostles in Ohio, Indiana, and Missouri looking for a new location. All is in readiness. There is money, power, glory ahead of us. Great God! We can't let anything happen to the Prophet now! We must get him out. Don't you see?"

"Yes, I see—but Sister Margaret, what of her?"

"What do you mean?"

"Does she go with us—to the land 'where we shall not be persecuted'?"

"No—no. I promise you. If your testimony is right—is for us—I promise you, she stays here. And that will be best," he added with a sigh of relief.

"I will testify—for him." Emma spoke quietly, resolutely, but her face was not without shame.

Sidney took her hand and held it sympathetically. "I'm sorry, Sister Emma, to ask you to do this. But we must remember that there is a higher law—an end that justifies us. The Church of Mormon must not fail! You are doing this for your husband's religion."

Emma raised her head and gazed directly into Sidney Rigdon's eyes.

"I am doing this for my husband."

Chapter Seventeen

LONG BEFORE THE HOUR ANNOUNCED FOR THE PRELIMINARY hearing of "People v. Smith," the city hall was surrounded with great crowds of farmers. Standing in groups, they discussed with vehement, angry gestures the probable outcome of the trial. They had made up their minds on the verdict and were in no mood to be contradicted. Rigdon and Piatt had sent out an emergency call to the Mormons, who arrived in full force to protect the Prophet from this latest "persecution." As they walked into the hall, they were jeered and taunted by the belligerent citizens.

The family of the accused had conspicuous seats near the front. Ma Smith, her claw-like hands twitching feverishly, peered truculently at the prosecutors. There was no fear in her expression; rather, she seemed to welcome this opportunity for publicity. Pa Smith and his sons were less sure of themselves; they seemed nervously aware of the unquestionable antagonism permeating the room. Rigdon, tensely alert, sat beside the lawyer imported for Joe's defence. From time to time his eyes shifted uneasily over the crowded court room.

On the other side of the hall, in behalf of the prosecution, were Parson Eller, Editor Grandin, Si Treadwell, and various other complainants. Farther back and inconspicuously placed, Margaret Treadwell sat beside her mother. She was a pretty little thing of about nineteen. Her face seemed tired, haggard, and swollen from long weeping. Aware of the many pairs of curious eyes upon her, she sat with averted head, partially hidden behind a large Leghorn hat. When Joe was led into the room, she raised her head and looked at him earnestly for a long moment, then turned away.

Emma, simply dressed, looking pale and detached, as if preoccupied with far-away thoughts, sat aloof near the defence. She manifested neither dread nor interest throughout most of the proceedings. Occasionally she brought her eyes to bear on Margaret, who sat directly opposite, but her enigmatic expression betrayed nothing to the curious observers.

The entrance of the Prophet, guarded by the bailiff, was accomplished with the practised air of one who faces martyrdom dramatically. He was well dressed (thanks to Rigdon's surveillance); his flamboyant handsomeness and assured, pontifical manner stirred his devotees to an admiring murmur of partisanship, but aroused the opposition to an equally vehement anger and contempt. Not once through the hearing did the Prophet's face betray concern or regret. He sat with a detached, indifferent air.

Justice Herrick, a man of unquestioned probity, heard the charges which were to determine whether Joe should be bound over to the Grand Jury for trial in the circuit court. There was little order to the proceedings, the evidence being presented in a disjointed and spontaneous fashion, as was the custom among the settlers, who believed that their own expeditious ways of settling disputes were more direct than the technical and prolix methods of sophistical lawyers and judges.

The prosecution first introduced a number of witnesses who, duly sworn, were questioned as to the disorderly and intemperate habits of the accused. One David Baldwin did testify that he had known the defendant since he was a child; that he knew him to be a drunkard, a liar, and a gambler; that, moreover, when intoxicated, he was extremely quarrelsome; and that on one occasion, when working with him on the digging of a well, the accused had become angry, struck at him, knocking out his front teeth and breaking his jaw.

One Thomas Stafford did testify to the defendant's thieving habits, stating that, upon missing his sheep, he had lain in wait one night and had discovered the accused and his brothers in the act of stealing them.

One Jonathan Wayne did testify that the defendant was unreliable, contradictory, and immoral; that he knew him at one hour to be addicted to vice and heinous practices and in another to pretend piety and acquaintance with the Almighty; and that, having known him and his family for years, he could truthfully pronounce them to be notorious for laziness, witchcraft, and dishonesty.

One Jake Bower did testify that the accused had declared one night when intoxicated that the Golden Plates were only a joke to dupe his family and to get money from his friends, and that he, the accused, was surprised when people believed the story.

Five other witnesses testified that the accused had stated in their presence that "adultery is no crime," that he, the Prophet, "is as good as Jesus Christ," and that "it is as bad to injure or attack him as to attack God."

Ma Smith, beside herself with anger, jumped to her feet, shouting hysterically, "It's a lie! It's a lie! He's the Prophet! You can't say those things and live!"

The Justice rapped for order. When Ma Smith refused to be quieted, the constable was instructed to eject her from the court. She was forcibly led out, struggling and screaming dire warnings at her persecutors.

The prosecution next called to the stand a Mormon, one John Bugg, who claimed to have been freed of devils by the Prophet's miraculous powers.

Question: Did the accused cast devils out of you?

Answer: No, sir.

Question: What, don't you claim to have had devils cast out?

Answer: Yes, sir.

Question: Did Joe Smith have a hand in it?

Answer: The Prophet was God's instrument.

Question: Are you sure they were devils?

Answer: Yes, sir.

Question: Pray, what were they like?

Answer: It wouldn't do no good to tell you what they was like. It was a spiritual sight and you don't understand things of the spirit.

The witness obstinately evaded further questions and was dismissed.

Si Treadwell was the next to testify for the prosecution. A tense, nervous quiet fell on the room as the stooped, grey-haired old man took the stand. Having been sworn in, he was addressed by the Prosecuting Attorney :

"Silas Treadwell, will you tell the court what you know about Joseph Smith, setting forth your reasons for the charges brought against him?"

"Your Honour, the other witnesses have testified concerning the defendant's character and standing in this community. My testimony concerns only a specific, but for me a most disgraceful experience. We had a happy and contented home until this man's influence cast a shadow upon it. My daughter, Margaret, was a Christian girl until the accused, with his visions and impious stories, persuaded her that her religion was false and evil. He turned her against the God of her fathers. Your Honour, he influenced her in immoral and dishonourable ways, so that her nature has been completely changed. When we discovered all this, we warned him to cease molesting her, but he frightened and intimidated her by telling her to disobey her father's command. Your Honour——"

Here the old man's voice broke; he lowered his head in shame. The attorney, with kindly sympathy, questioned him so as to ease his humiliation without omitting the salient points in the testimony.

When he had finished, his daughter was called to the stand. This was the moment for which the people, packed into the tiny room, had waited. Breathless, their faces set, they leaned forward to catch a glimpse of the girl as she timidly moved forward, still with downcast eyes, and took the oath. One could almost hear the thoughts in their clicking, avid minds as their eyes gazed upon this flower-like person, concerning whom such wild tales had been circulating. They looked from the girl to the man accused of "unduly influencing" her. There was no question to most of them of his guilt. To the "decent" citizens it was

guilt. To the Mormons, the "persecuted" was their Prophet and could do no wrong: the whole charge of disorderly conduct was simply an attack on the True Faith, trumped up by those who neither understood nor wanted to understand God's latest Revelations to His people.

The lawyer addressed her with the usual question, "Do you know this man, the defendant, Joseph Smith?"

Joe leaned forward in his chair, fixing the girl with a stern, almost threatening look. Rigdon, bent over the table, his eyes narrowed, waited nervously for her to speak. It seemed that she would never raise her head. The prosecution stirred uneasily. Margaret turned ghastly pale and seemed to lose all control over her body as she held on to a chair for support. Finally, as if in response to the solemn, commanding gaze of the Prophet, she lifted her head slowly, painfully, and looked directly into his face. Long he held her eyes. It was as if he spoke to her.

Suddenly, into the dreadful silence, she cried, "No, no! I won't talk against you! They can't make me do it!" Her voice rose to hysterical pitch as she went on, "He is the Prophet! He has baptized me! I have been washed in the blood of the Lamb! He has saved my soul and brought me happiness in the Lord! I will go with him, no matter what you do! You can't keep me away from him!"

Her mother and Parson Eller went to her, but she pushed them aside, screaming, "They want to take me away! Save me, Prophet Joseph, save me!"

During her passionate outburst the Prophet sat impassive. As the struggling girl was hurried away, he rose, and, with a practised look of compassionate pity, called out to her with a dramatic gesture, "You will be saved, Sister Margaret! Your faith has made you whole!"

After the first moment of shock, pandemonium broke loose in the court room. Although the Mormons hailed Margaret's outburst as a final and complete vindication, the mass of spectators let their smouldering rage break through the restraint imposed by the decorum of the court. There were jeers, hisses, cat-calls. Some burst into threats, not only against the Prophet, but against the entire Smith family. There were cries of "Lock him up!" "Give him the tar and feathers!" "Drive him out'a town!" "Lynch him!" "Come on, boys, let him stretch hemp!" The feeling rose, wave upon wave, until the mob got to its feet and started to press forward. In vain did the Justice rap for order.

Joe sat immobile, surveying the threatening crowd with a cool insolence that only antagonized them further. Again the Justice pounded for order. Five or six men rushed forward as if to lay hands on the Prophet.

Parson Eller sprang from his seat and stopped them. They drew back sullenly. As he raised his hand in warning, the crowd grew quiet. That gesture commanded respect from every citizen in the room.

"My friends," he began calmly, yet firmly, "there must be no violence. This is a court of law and we are Christians. Whatever our feelings, we must respect everyone's right to be heard."

They subsided into their seats and that moment of danger passed.

The preliminary hearing soon came to a close. With the indisposition of the main witness, the Justice found it necessary to continue the hearing at a later date. Joe was led from the room amidst muttered threats and angry imprecations. Again the spectators gathered in groups outside the Town Hall. There was talk of violence. The Mormons hurried out of the village to the Smith house, where they met for serious consultation.

Chapter Eighteen

DURING THE FEVERISH, NERVE-RACKING DAYS FOLLOWING THE trial, Emma for the first time entered actively and importantly into the Mormon intrigues. She had partially committed herself in her promise to testify to her husband's fidelity, and her conscience had been only partially relieved when the hysterical Margaret had saved her that dark necessity. But now came the need for quick action and clear thinking that taxed her deep calm to the limit. Joe's irritated belligerency was only a superficial mask for a nervous fear. He had spent a week in jail, and the threats of his enemies were a strain not easily endured, even by a Prophet. The other Smiths were by turns maudlin, unctuous, and childishly defiant. Apostles, mumbling and anxious, sat everlastingly about the house, and converts came from all directions, having learned by the "grapevine" that a migration—a *hegira*, they called it—was being planned.

Finally Rigdon came to Emma. "It's no use trying to consult or persuade or reason with any of them. You and I must decide what's to be done, then tell them."

"You are right. We are wasting time. I think we should leave here as soon as Joe is freed."

Emma spoke with conviction. Since the trial she had been haunted by the cries of the mobs clamouring for conviction, then for vengeance.

"But he must be got out of here before the trial. If I get him away, can you make the necessary arrangements, get the flock together, and follow in the spring?"

"I don't like that. Why can't I go on with you and Joe? Let Ma and the boys gather in the followers."

"They can't be trusted. You know that. Besides, we must leave immediately."

"Immediately?"

"To-morrow night. And travel hard and fast. We are taking too big a risk in further delay. Since the trial Margaret has gone almost completely out of her senses, and the people in Palmyra are up in arms."

Emma knew he was right and agreed to his plan. It was a relief to be about the business of getting them off. Since the hour that she had come into the Smith shambles, she had been waiting for the hour to leave it. In a steady fire of energy she spent the day organizing the Prophet's flight. While her neat handwriting copied the latest Revelation commanding the Mormons to flee, her mind ran on: "We are going away—West—to a new place where we are not known—perhaps there all will be different perhaps there Joe and I can find another life!"

That evening Sidney Rigdon presided over the final meeting of the Mormons in the Smith house. He had seen the handwriting on the wall. Without waiting for the Prophet's consent, he announced the special Revelation :

"That ye might come free of the power of the enemy and that ye might live only with righteous people who are without sin and hate, that ye might escape the calumny and enmity of the false ones :

"Wherefore, for these reasons, I give you now this Revelation, commanding you to go straightway to Ohio. There you shall be given new laws ; there you shall come into your own power ; and from there you shall go into all the world and preach the Gospel of Mormon, for I have a Zion in store for you. Take with you all your goods and monies, ye that are faithful! Sell your farms and with your families depart immediately for this Promised Land—the land flowing with milk and money—the Canaan filled with riches, power, glory!"

The following night, Brother Sidney with the connivance of a bribed jailer delivered the "persecuted" from his cell. Joe fled to his house—to Emma, who was nervously, excitedly, waiting for him. . . .

Later he crept from the house and with Rigdon began the portentous hegira westward from the spot that was ever after known as "the birthplace of the Church of Mormon!"

Emma, alone in the large bed, stared into darkness. A light shone in her eyes—to be "free of the power of the enemy . . . without sin or hate . . . to escape the calumny and enmity of the false ones . . . the new Zion . . . the land of Canaan!"

Chapter Nineteen

THE PROPHET AND APOSTLE RIGDON TURNED THEIR FLIGHT WESTward to good account. They left New York with Kirtland, Ohio, as their immediate objective. Sidney in his earlier years had preached there as a Campbellite evangelist, knew the temper of the people, and considered it the logical place to set up the new Zion.

They had not travelled far, however, when a new idea came to them. They soon found that wherever they stopped for rest and lodging, a crowd of inquisitive onlookers gathered about them. They were a singularly impressive pair—Joe, with his spectacular height and cavalier manner; Sidney, in striking contrast, with his cultivated voice and dignified austere bearing. Together they never failed to arouse curiosity and questions.

For the first few days it seemed wise to avoid this curiosity. They talked very little, stating simply that they were on business, going West to prospect. But when they were a week's distance from the wrathful mobs of Palmyra, courage returned, and, with it, an expansion of their proselytizing zeal.

They arrived in Hillman in north-western Pennsylvania one Sunday morning. Over their breakfast in the Frontier Tavern, Joe opened the subject occupying both their minds.

“Why not a meeting here this afternoon?”

“Hm . . . possibly. I've been thinking of it.”

“Can hold it right here in the tavern. Might try it out on a brand-new crowd. Easy to get the people because they're to have a sing festival in the Town Hall to-night. There'll be lots of folks in.”

Rigdon thought some moments, his brow puckered. “Yes it's a good idea. How shall we manage it? Want to preach?”

“You'd better talk first. Tell 'em the Mormon story, the one you used in Palmyra—that'll give 'em something to think about. Then you can introduce me. We could sell a few of the Bibles—not many—just enough to keep 'em rare—in demand.”

“Yes—and we're on our way West to open a new country—by divine command. . . . Good.” Rigdon eyed Joe critically. “You'd better freshen up a bit—get a rest and a shave. These people aren't cattle. This is a fair-sized town, you know.”

Joe flashed a look of arrogant contempt. “Needn't tell me how to deal with people. Guess I know how to handle them. I'll look after myself—understand?”

Rigdon's face tightened but he remained silent. He had already learned the wisdom of avoiding antagonizing Joe's wilful, hypersensitive nature, but the young man was not content to

let the subject drop. "Afraid I'll tell on you, Sid?" he sneeringly heckled him.

Rigdon bore this taunt and all others meekly, knowing that the strain of the past weeks had left Joe nervous and excitable. A curious adjustment had taken place in their relationship. Now that the Church was organized and plans, more or less definite, laid for the rise of the New Religion, Joe no longer deferred to his Apostle's wisdom; rather, he seemed to resent Rigdon's intelligence and cultivated manner as somehow a reflection on his own deficiencies. Although he never lost an opportunity to refer insidiously to Rigdon's part in the Revelation of the Golden Book, the Apostle found that these allusions came oftener when Joe was drinking.

And he was often drinking these days. All of Rigdon's remonstrances against his half-drunken boasting only aroused him to greater arrogance and cunning.

The Sunday afternoon meeting in Hillman was an encouraging success. The crowds listened open-mouthed to the strange tale of the miraculous discovery of the mystic *Book of Mormon*, of the divine and miraculous powers of the Prophet. The scholarly, dramatic address of Rigdon, climaxed by the appearance of the Prophet in person, won awed attention from the crowd of stodgy Pennsylvania farmers packed into the lobby of the tavern. Joe's exhortation, the proper mixture of naïve humility and swaggering assurance, completed the spell. They fought for the Bible; they pressed about the two men—the Elect of God and his first Apostle; they questioned, ever eager for more. The few who scoffed or expostulated against "the tricksters" were pushed aside impatiently. Forgetting the sing festival which had brought them to town, they stayed on far into the night, listening to the wondrous stories of miracles, revelations and visions of the new Zion out West.

With apparent reluctance the Prophet promised his avid inquirers that when the new kingdom was located he would notify them. In the meantime an Apostle would come to Hillman to baptize them, and they could prepare to follow him to the Land of Mormon by selling their lands and turning them into money, cattle, horses—things useful in the country selected by the Lord.

The story of this triumph repeated itself many times as they zigzagged their way west. Instead of a surreptitious flight their journey took on the colour of a victorious crusade. By this time, drunk with the success of their missionary achievements, they had decided not to stop in Mantua, Ohio, nor even in Kirtland, their original destination, but to press on, farther West, perhaps to Missouri, where land was now cheap and plentiful.

Another Revelation was dispatched to Palmyra: "Go ye on beyond the Mississippi, to that vast stretch which reaches even

unto the Pacific. Now that ye have proven your powers, have shown yourselves worthy of the great truth entrusted to you, I command you not to stop at Ohio, but to pass through, preaching the Gospel as ye go. Apostles Piatt, Hurlbutt, and Hyram Smith will follow in your footsteps, visiting the villages and cities where ye have sowed the seed of the new religion. They are empowered to baptize the converted, to sell the *Book of Mormon* (for \$1.50) and to organize the new Mormons into bands for the westward migration. The new converts should bring all their money and goods for the glorification of the Lord's mighty works. Until we meet in the Holy Land, Mizpah!"

And so it came to pass that while Joe, in a state of semi-intoxication from rum and Revelation, and prodded on by the shrewd but nervous Sidney, gave the first Revelation to the heathen, he was followed by the Palmyra contingent of Apostles, baptizing, exhorting, and corralling the credulous and avaricious into the Mormon fold.

The Prophet had been led to linger longer in Mantua, Ohio, than Rigdon deemed wise. There they had met with phenomenal success. A camp meeting of Methodists was in progress when they arrived, and the evangelical circuit rider had whipped the emotions of the populace into high tension. Joe and Sidney watched the wild exhibition with intense interest. They listened to the fanatical exhortations of the ecstatic revivalist. They saw converts fall to the ground, where, apparently lifeless, they lay for a long time prostrate. Young men and women particularly gave themselves over to the delirium. Contorting their faces into apish grimaces, they crept about on their hands and knees, rolled upon the ground, and imitated wild Indians at warfare. They knocked each other down, pretended to scalp each other and beat themselves amidst horrible shouting and hysterical crying. Some dashed through the fields, jumping upon stumps, preaching to imaginary congregations, and plunging into the near-by stream to perform the baptismal ceremony. In the dead of night fantastic figures could be seen running over the fields and hills in pursuit, as they later claimed, of brilliant balls of fire flashing through the atmosphere like flaming meteors. Leaping high into the air, they would snatch at the Spirit of God, which descended from on high to wash them clean of sin and purge them of disbelief.

The Prophet, undeterred by the Methodist success, set up his own camp and soon reduced the rival meeting to a sideshow. The sweating Methodist exhorter, with his promises of a vague future reward, could not compete with the magnetic brilliance of the two handsome men who "spoke with tongues," who carried a Bible which brought religion up to date, and who

promised immediate Power and Glory to all who followed them to the Promised Land.

In the audience at Mantua were two women who challenged the powers of the Prophet. He accepted their challenge, thus protracting his stay in the village. Felicity Turner, a dark, restless woman of superior education, had attended Joe's meetings from the first. She had formerly been a schoolmistress, but was now married to a well-to-do but rather stolid farmer, who had accepted the Mormon religion almost as soon as the Prophet arrived in town. She herself had held out at first, but Lem, her husband, whom Joe had made an Apostle immediately upon his baptism, invited the Prophet to stay at the Turner home throughout the rest of his Mantua visit. Sidney objected, fearing the indiscretion which constant rum-drinking induced in Joe. But as Lem's fortune was considerable (it was most desirable that it be taken to Missouri), they decided to risk the dangers of the precarious situation, and Joe moved into the Turner house.

Soon after, Joe sent Turner with Rigdon to Garrettsville, some miles distant, to conduct a two-day meeting. Upon their return they found that Felicity had been thoroughly converted. From that time on she was a passionate devotee—an ardent proselytizer for the Prophet and his faith.

The other woman, Sophronia Doolittle, constituted an entirely different problem. A spare, angular spinster of great wealth, she lived alone in Mantua's finest mansion, defending her fortune and virginity with Spartan persistence. But the Prophet wrought a great transformation in Sophronia. Upon first hearing Joe, she had become an almost hysterical advocate of Mormonism. Her complete capitulation to the new religion startled the town and exerted no little influence in winning over many of the hesitant.

Quick to seize this advantage, the Prophet went to the Doolittle mansion in response to an urgent invitation to dine. He had eaten heavily of the rich food, eyeing the table silver speculatively, and expanding unctuously to the effusive flattery with which his mesmerized hostess hung upon his boastful tales of intimacy with God and the angels.

Fortified by the rum consumed before he had come, Joe throughout the dinner withstood the unmistakable signs of Sophronia's excitement fairly well. In the parlour afterwards the poor woman, beside herself with ecstasy, flung herself on her knees before him:

“Bless me, Prophet Joseph! Lay on thy hands in blessing!”

Joe, who was reasonably sober by this time, carefully placed his fleshy hands upon the woman's straining head.

“Thy blessing omnipotent upon this thy sister, Sophronia Doolittle! Sanctify and anoint her!”

When she did not rise, Joe lifted her. The trembling woman clutched him, sobbing: "I've had a marvellous Revelation, Prophet! I was told to give my all, my goods, my fortune, myself to you! Take me! Tell me how I can best serve you!"

Joe looked with repugnance at the crazed, lean face of the desiccated virgin. Then he glanced about the room. A rich painting above the carved mantel caught his eye. He remembered the silverware. Placing his hands on the woman's bony shoulders, he let them slide down her arms and grasp her waist. Then, with closed eyes, he pontifically intoned, "Take this woman under cover of thy mantle. . . . She has offered herself as handmaiden. . . . Do thou as Lord prepare her for such service as best suits thy purposes. . . . We shall await thy Revelation. . . ."

His hands were firm and strong on her body; his voice solemn, soothing, caressing, yet renunciatory. The quivering woman fell into a trance. Joe examined her helpless face with canny shrewdness. It was as if he said to her, "We must wait on the Lord. We must not be tempted . . . carnal . . . I, too, desire closer union. . . . But we must be strong . . . wait . . ."

She shook rapturously and fell against him, breathing in a muted voice, "How holy, how strong, how perfect you are. . . . Pray that I may be worthy!"

Once outside the mansion, Joe gave a sigh of relief, shrugged his shoulders, and dashed to the nearest tavern for a drink. Later he stumbled through the darkness to the Turner home, where a more acceptable handmaiden awaited him. . . .

The Prophet and his chief Apostle did finally move on, leaving two injunctions to the Mantua satellites.

To Felicity: "The Lord commands you to follow right speedily. Your great wisdom and education can be used in setting up a school for the instruction of the Lord's children!"

To Sophronia: "The Lord commands patience. Your great influence must be used here to influence people in Mantua to come into the Mormon fold. Stay and wax great in this service and you will be richly rewarded in the Lord's own good time. But meanwhile sell all your goods and send one-tenth to help prepare a house for your reception when that time comes!"

Rigdon's turn at female complications came when they neared Kirtland, the originally planned site for Zion. Here he was remembered as a serious, pious man who had preached, first, orthodox Baptist, then Campbellite precepts to the community several years before. They were received with much respect into the house of Rigdon's old friend, Alex Behr.

Behr had a young daughter, Frieda, now seventeen, who had grown into a ripe, voluptuously beautiful creature. Her slow, rather heavy Nordic sensuousness stirred a flame in the breast

of the ascetic Sidney, who had lived chastely through the years of his wife's invalidism. He tried to avoid the girl, but the nearness of the romantic, adventurous men of God in the quiet colonial house "where nothing ever happened" had brought to life deep, stirring passions that Frieda until now had only dimly perceived.

She did not like Joe—his brazen assurance repelled her—but the nervous avoidance of the thin, dark man, whom she had romanticized when, as a little girl, she had worshipped him years before, only fanned the flames of desire. She lost all power of thinking, save of one thing.

Coming into his room with a lighted candle late one night, Rigdon found Frieda stretched on his bed. She rose as he approached. They regarded each other silently, then the girl reached over and snuffed out the candle. . . .

Sidney, conscience-stricken, had known no peace since. Frieda was poison in his blood. . . .

Chapter Twenty

THUS IT CAME ABOUT THAT UPON THE ARRIVAL OF THE PROPHET and his shadow in the Promised Land, their immediate task was to prepare for the reception of their overland converts. The first Palmyra group, a hundred strong, was on its way under the tireless vigilance of Ma Smith. Emma, with other Mormons, was to follow as soon as money could be raised on their dubious property.

Missouri in 1831—that “promontory of civilization into an ocean of savagery”—was a wild and sparsely settled outland, but Joe, glowing with the success of his triumphal journey, plunged into the organization of Zion, as he named his new Jerusalem, with qualmless audacity.

He and Sidney had made the three-hundred-mile journey from St. Louis to this spot on foot, arriving in Jackson County in late March. The trip had been a difficult one. Their knapsacks, filled with clothing, corn bread, raw pork, and copies of the *Book of Mormon*, burdened their shoulders as they plodded on their exhausting way, and Sidney was ill much of the time. They travelled for whole days, from early morning till late night, without seeing a house or fire. The trail often led through heavy timber and over rough hills. There were no roads through the wild territory—only wagon tracks, at some points scarcely visible.

But when at last they came upon the vast stretches of rolling prairie, decorated with flowers as brilliant as stars and alive with buffalo, elk, deer, turkeys, geese, ducks, and rabbits, Joe was delighted. These fertile fields, he was confident, could be turned to profitable ends. As he tramped along, he observed that the squatters knew nothing of the usefulness of this land—they considered it waste space and sought out the oak and hickory timber sections. But Joe saw possibilities in the great sweeps of virgin prairie.

Reaching Independence, then the eastern terminus of the famous Santa Fé trail and the jumping-off place for many caravans headed for Oregon and California, the Prophet, tired of travel and eager to let the Glory begin, put down his sack.

“Here is the place—the new Zion!” he announced.

The weary exhorters found generous welcome in this village consisting of a brick court-house, two or three stores, and about twenty log houses. Within a few hours the spread of their fame had begun.

The town was thoroughly studied before the Prophet finally selected the site for the Temple of Zion, a lot near the court-house and convenient to a timber land which could be freely

used for building. Large purchases of land were made from the settlers and the federal government on easy terms, and the two men proceeded to stake out claims, later to be sold to the on-coming converts at a substantial profit to the Church of Mormon.

This programme was comparatively easy, for they had arrived in Missouri in the heyday of public land purchases for speculation. In 1830 these sales amounted to two million dollars throughout the United States, and already in 1831 showed promise of phenomenal increase! It was the "reign of Andrew Jackson," the "friend of the people," and the public lands were sold to the poor man for as little as one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre. Land offices were opened in the West, and settlers by the thousands flocked to the new El Dorado to begin life anew.

Much of this land was never paid for. Banks, caught up in the speculative fever, advanced great sums on easy credit, pyramiding boom on boom until men's minds grew dizzy with visions of fantastic fortunes. Everybody with a small accumulation of capital, it seemed, invested in the "lands out West." Fabulous stories circulated regarding the mineral wealth, the agricultural riches, the industrial possibilities, which, overnight, were to create fortunes for the adventurous who were hardy and intrepid enough to withstand the rigours of cold, hunger, disease, and hostile Indians. Thus, in the beginning, it was land: the great stretches of diversified hills and plains, forests and prairies, fertile fields and productive timber groves.

Joe and Sidney, swept up in the insidious persuasion of speculation, had not neglected on their proselytizing march West to emphasize this promise of earthly as well as of heavenly reward, but once on the spot, with visual evidence of the Utopia all about them, their Revelations and dispatches East played upon the single theme: "Land, land, yet more land!" It was this refrain which their missionaries carried throughout the United States and foreign countries, and it was this refrain which brought money to the Prophet and the Church, for, lo! it came to pass that many of the converts were wealthy.

Waiting for the first contingents to arrive, the Prophet covered the surrounding country, marking out certain portions for purchase. He and Sidney had brought enough money with them to stagger the settlers into compliance with any suggestion. All stood eager, not only to surrender their stakes for a reasonable price or at least for a promise, but also to join the ranks of what seemed to be the greatest promotional enterprise ever undertaken in the name of religion.

Soon Hezekiah and Piatt arrived, breathless and fearful lest they lose out on the first stakes. Joe had not expected them for another two weeks. He greeted Apostle Tunk with a long whistle.

"What the devil are you doing here? You're supposed to be baptizing in Ohio!"

"Finished 'em up a month ago. One hundred and fifty of 'em—all waitin' to start West. Had a hard time keepin' 'em from comin' right along!"

Hezekiah grinned up at the tall man in the high woodman's boots and beaver hat. Joe slapped him on the back with gusto.

"Good job, Hezzie! We'll have 'em all comin' our way now! Let's look about. I'll show you Zion."

After all, Joe remembered, it was Hezekiah's money that had given them their start. Good old codger! Besides, he was happy to have someone take Rigdon off his hands. Pretty fed up on him. Damned smart, but the fellow never forgot who he was. Of course, he, Joe, had him where he wanted him, but even holding that Spaulding manuscript business over his head couldn't wipe that damned supercilious smile off his face. He'd dragged Rigdon about with him day and night for four months. His airs, his Boston accent, his elegant manners—God! What a relief to have an honest to goodness farmer to bully again! He gave Hezekiah another slap on the back that almost knocked the little old man off his feet, but Tunk beamed, pleased by this unexpected familiarity from the high and mighty Prophet.

"Have a drink—do ya good!"

Joe jerked the rum bottle from his pocket, took a long swig, and offered it to Hezekiah, who instantly grew serious, disapproving.

"None of that for me. You know I give it up. I hoped you'd quit too." He looked at Joe fearfully, but the Prophet was in a light mood this morning and spoke flippantly:

"Not on your life! You miss too many of the good things of life, Hezzie. You're too serious. The Lord loveth the cheerful and happy, and no good thing will He withhold—remember? Well, come on! Let's find the others and take a look over the new Kingdom. . . ."

Work on the city of Zion proceeded at an amazing rate. Settlers from other counties, hearing of money to be made, came to help on construction. Temporary shacks went up to house the men; cooks, with supplies of corn and wild meat, were brought in; and all were paid off promptly so that the Mormons, in those first days, acquired a reputation for quick and generous pay.

Soon the caravans of converts began to arrive. First came Ma Smith and her group. It was, so old-timers said, the most helter-skelter, battered wagon train that ever came over the plains—creaking schooners, lean cattle, broken furniture, weary travellers, but thanks to Ma's perpetual religious fury, still enthusiastically eager to enter into the Kingdom.

A week later the Mantua contingent arrived. Possibly Felicity's organizing genius was responsible for the speed and comparative ease of their journey. Their wagons were sturdy and new, their cattle plentiful and healthy. To the impoverished Missouri settlers, these first Ohio pioneers looked like gods of empire.

The Prophet made their arrival a great occasion for ceremony and rejoicing. The first mass meeting was held on the spot marked out for the Temple. Settlers came from the surrounding territory, and a hundred, carried away by the excitement, were converted and baptized. Sister Felicity was appointed "God's chosen to direct the destinies of the new crop of Mormons."

Joe's relief at discovering that Sister Sophronia had obeyed his command to stay at home was so great that he gave his joy in Sister Felicity's "heroic sacrifice" unbridled expression. He had not been sure that Sophronia would stay at home; her obedience was a great strain off his mind.

Later, others began to come in a steady stream, and the Prophet's problem was to care for them, to provide temporary shelter, while the lots were being cleared and the log houses erected.

In the meantime the Prophet had purchased, in the name of the Church of Mormon, several large tracts of land, to which he added as money came in or credit was extended. A contractor came out from St. Louis, and, with his help, Joe and Sidney drew the plans for Zion. There were to be fifty streets cutting each other at right angles. These were to be named after the Apostles and most generous donors. The Temple site was placed at the crest of the gently sloping hill, the central point of the town, overlooking a beautiful valley, dotted here and there with groves of rich timber. A school, a post-office, and a general store, as well as other necessary public enterprises, were planned. The Prophet's house occupied the block just below the Temple. The Apostles and converts were to choose their property in the order of their entry into the faith. This gave Tunk precedence over Rigdon, to the secret delight of all except Sidney himself, who flushed when Joe joked to him about it:

"The first shall be last, Brother Sidney! The Lord appreciates your virtues, but told me to remind you that pride goeth before a fall."

"My pride knows no fall," Rigdon replied with perfect calm. "It is a matter of indifference to me on which lot I build my house. All will be alike in the sight of the Lord."

Tunk, hearing this, could do nothing but choose the lot nearest the Prophet's. Then Rigdon looked over the town plan and placed his name on a small, inconspicuous location as far

removed from Joe's as possible. But before the builders set to work, Joe talked old Tunk out of his place:

"I'd like this lot for Brother Lem Turner—leader of our Mantua group. His wife, Felicity, is to teach the school, and I think it's only right, since she's a delicate, refined lady, that she should be near the Temple. She may need Sister Emma's help, too."

Tunk remained silent, loath to give up that high, important location.

"By the way, Brother Hezekiah," Joe went on suavely, "did I tell you that in the latest Revelation I was informed that you were just about ready for the gift of healing?"

Hezekiah brightened, a beady light coming into his cold, greedy eyes.

"Yes, yes, Brother Tunk, if you continue in your way of unselfish devotion—of generosity, of absolute obedience to all the Lord's requests—I think that any time now you will be ready for the power to lay on hands for the sick. . . . And so we'll just write Brother Turner's name in here and say nothing to anybody about this conversation. That lot on the store street will be fine for you. We'll call it Tunk Street and that will make it all agreeable, I believe. . . . You told me your sister and her adopted daughter are coming out with the Palmyra party. Too bad your wife didn't see the light and come along. Ever hear from her?"

Tunk's face clouded and a surly look came into his eyes. "I never want to see that woman again. In the sight of God, we're separated—divorced." He coughed nervously, hesitated, and finally, in a timid voice, asked, "Can't you make that a real divorce? The Lord didn't intend us to live alone. Remember you said it's my duty to take another wife—one that can bear children—and, since that woman won't give me a divorce, is the devil to have his way—keep me from bringing up seed for Zion?"

Joe's mind worked quickly. He suddenly perceived in Hezekiah's stumbling plea for another mate a broadening gleam of light which opened a daring, exciting field of possibilities for himself. He could see some of his own problems finding ecclesiastical authority in their solution. But he became canny as he replied in his best prophetic tones:

"We'll talk this matter over later. I'll have to discuss it with the Angel. Your problem is grave and must be carefully weighed. Perhaps I'll get a Revelation!"

Tunk heaved a great sigh of relief. "There's a little woman in Hillman—a young widow——"

Joe checked him quickly. "Not yet—no fornication in your mind, Tunk. You go ahead and speed up building, and the Lord will send me instructions in due time."

Joe swung away from this interview with a new thought to ponder. He took a long drink. Felicity, he recalled, had no children. Lem's too weak. . . . If Felicity had a real man—he swaggered a bit more—at least she might be given that right! We need all the children we can get—to multiply our seed. . . .

Chapter Twenty-one

WHEN THE PALMYRA TRAIN EMBARKED UPON ITS WESTWARD journey in the early spring, Emma rode at its head. As she leaned far out from the white cover of her Conestoga wagon to catch a last glimpse of the place that had been her home for five years, her heart, though sad and slow, felt freed of a great load. She recalled ruefully the hopeful emotions that had filled her as a bride when approaching the town, over the same road, so long ago. Not one of her plans or expectations had been realized; not one hour in all of the five years did she wish to keep with her. She watched the towers of the court-house—that place in which mobs had cried “String him up!” and “Let him stretch hemp!”—grow shorter and shorter as the wagon descended the hill, turned out upon the Pittsburgh trail, leaving Palmyra behind, a thing of the past.

There were hot tears upon her face as she rode away—tears partly of resentment and regret over the five unhappy years, but, as she turned her back upon the town, that feeling gradually lightened and gave way to one of relief. Her eyes looked ahead over the road which was to carry them to the great West. The tears dried and on her face began to dawn that far-seeing look of courageous, patient determination that marked the pioneer woman.

This day, this hour, this start, marked the beginning of a new life for Emma, and she faced it with clear eyes. If her heart beat unusually hard and strong, it was not from fear or dread, but from a sense of excitement, of sharp realization that the great hour was upon her. She was emigrating! All that lay behind her of her married life was dead, and most of it was to be forgotten—entirely. From that remoter period, her childhood, there were certain precious things buried deep in the roots of her being—things that would follow her to the grave—but since reading her father’s letter with its dreadful burden of news, Emma felt that she would never return to Harmony. The letter had arrived only yesterday, just before she was ready to leave with her caravan for the Promised Land.

DEAR DAUGHTER—This letter is to tell you that your mother departed this life last Sunday about midnight. She was taken suddenly ill the night before of inflammation of the stomach and all efforts to save her were of no avail. Her sufferings were great. I don’t think she struggled very hard to live because she had been ailing and unlike herself for some time. Her last conscious act was to bring me to her bed and make me swear to offer you a home in case you ever need one. She sent you her love.

I am a man of my word. Your mother was a good Christian woman, much beloved in Harmony, and her departure was a great blow to me and to all who knew her. The promise I made stands good. This home is open to you at any time. As your mother wrote you before, I am ready to forgive, to welcome you to this home, and to do my duty by you as a father.

There is plenty of room, as you know, and now that your mother is gone the place seems too big for an old man to live in alone. I pray for you daily, my daughter.

YOUR FATHER.

Standing amidst the packing-cases, Emma had read her father's letter twice through. There was a sharp, brief struggle within herself. Had her mother been alive, alone, and calling for her, she would have started in that very hour, for her mother was the only tie that held her to her other life. When she realized that her mother was really gone, the tears came, slowly at first, but she could not check them. Finally, she gave herself up to a storm of weeping—weeping such as she had never before known—not for her mother alone, but for the dead days of her past—the happy days of her childhood. She knew well that with her mother's going was severed the only bond that linked her to Harmony—to the rapidly fading memories of life when it was fresh and happy. . . .

She was cutting herself off from all her past—she was leaving Palmyra and Harmony, her two homes, never to return. They were dead. There in the pale March sunshine her mind said farewell to them and her heart cast off the heaviness of its sorrow.

Leading the caravan rode Slim Shanks, the half-breed Choctaw Indian, dispatched by Joe from Cincinnati as guide over the perilous trail to St. Louis. Slim knew the roads, the Indians, the Whites. He was a silent soul, but in his hawk eyes and certain manner Emma found infinite assurance. As they jogged over the wild trails, his lean, tireless body, astride the horse with nonchalant grace, became a symbol of safety to her. And the Indian recognized Emma's quality instantly. Although Joe's brother, Hyram, drove the team and was the nominal head of the group, it was Emma whom Slim consulted when emergencies arose.

The Palmyra detachment consisted of a dozen covered wagons, each carrying a family with all its earthly belongings. Eighteen men rode on horseback. But it was a sorry-looking crew! Save for Emma's broadhorn, new and strongly built (thanks to the Bible money and Rigdon's insistence), there was not a prosperous-looking wagon in the lot. These outfits, representing the pooled resources of the Mormon families in Joe's immediate

neighbourhood, were worn and dilapidated. As Slim surveyed them lined up in the road in the early dawn to begin the fifteen-hundred-mile trek, he said to Emma with a pitying scorn:

"We'll never make Pittsburgh without help—be picking up the pieces all along the way. But the converted Mennonites at Truesdale have stout wagons and strong horses and oxen. They can carry the load."

And they did. As the caravan moved slowly, labouring over the old trail road to Pittsburgh, they were joined by other groups of varying size—converted Mormons (first won by the blazing Prophet, later baptized by the zealous Tunk) now summoned by the lean courier, Slim, and ready for the great embarkation.

Emma was amazed at the superior quality of the people and at the completeness of their equipment. Many of their wagons were two-wheeled carts, constructed entirely of wood—the hubs of white elm; the spokes of ash or hickory; the felloes of black walnut, six inches thick, and dowelled together with seasoned hardwood pins; the linches of hickory or ash; even the thills of wood. The sturdy harnesses consisted of corn husk collars, hames cut from ash-tree roots, and tugs and lines from strong rawhide. They used hackamores instead of bridles. When the cart was drawn by one horse, the animal was lashed between the thills by rawhide straps attached to pins for a holdback on the steep mountain declines; when drawn by two or more horses, the additional animals were fastened ahead by straps attached to the thills of the cart. The oxen were yoked by means of a square piece of timber, hollowed out at the ends to fit over their necks, and fastened by rawhide straps to their horns.

The Pennsylvania *émigrés* surely knew how it was done and had prepared for their journey with characteristic thoroughness. At Lewistown there awaited them an entire village. They were from Gilead and had come the twenty miles in thirty covered wagons, driving their sleek cattle, swine, and sheep before them. All were encamped, having waited patiently for three days as they eagerly anticipated the arrival of the Prophet's wife and the Palmyra Mormons.

That night, beside the camp-fire, Emma sat with the women, listening to the story of their preparation for the great emigration:

"After the coming of Prophet Joseph—your husband, Sister Emma," this with a sort of incredulous, awed wonder, "our village voted to move—all of us. We came out from Germany fifteen years ago. We somehow belong together. We've accepted the religion of Mormon so that we could follow its Prophet, for that's what he commanded us to do."

"But your lands, your houses, your own church . . ." Emma's voice was filled with wonder.

"We took what we could get for them. We did sacrifice greatly and it was hard."

Some of the women stopped knitting to stare into the fire wistfully. "It was difficult, but one must be ready to sacrifice for his God, Sister Emma."

"Oh, we women have worked hard to be ready," a young woman broke in eagerly. "You should have seen our village this winter—getting our wagons made and the harnesses! We ordered all the leather in the tan-pits here about. Summoned ten cordwainers from Lewistown to work it into these extra strong harnesses. Did you ever see finer wagons than ours? We had the best wheelwrights and joiners in the county, and they've made our wagons to stand the hardest trails. Come see ours. We have all of mother's wedding furniture and grandfather Busch's secretary as well . . ."

The young woman laid aside the grey yarn she was knitting into socks for her blond husband, to show Emma the wonders of her possessions. A sleepy infant in a hammock, suspended from the hood of the wagon, held Emma's attention.

"Yours?" she asked her new friend.

"Yes. He's fourteen months old. Karl, we call him. I shall have another child this fall," she confided joyfully. Emma's face took on a strange glow. Over the sleeping infant, the two women looked into each other's face with shy understanding and smiled. Emma seemed about to make a confidence, too, but all she said was "I am glad."

Back at the fire, Emma listened while the Gilead women talked. Aunt Martha, a matriarchal old lady, was spokesman:

"It's been a busy winter. While our men hammered and sawed, bargained and sold, we women have been spinning and weaving. We've plenty of covers and to spare."

Indeed, Emma had not seen so much plenitude since leaving Harmony. She was warmed and comforted by these substantial German women, who seemed more like her own people. Her lonely heart responded to their simple kindly ways, while they looked upon the beautiful, resolute young wife of the Prophet with favour. After all had said *Gute Nacht*, Emma went back to her own wagon with lifted heart. As she drifted into the deep sleep of healthy exhaustion, she spoke to a star framed by the opening of the wagon: "I have a friend! I have a friend!"

Slowly, steadily, courageously, the ever-lengthening caravan rolled westward. Long hours on the road, from sunup until approaching sundown, brought them on and on. A curious succession of days, always the same, yet never the same. On the way by daylight, they plodded along the heavily rutted, well-marked middle trail to Pittsburgh. The higher mountains were a hazard. Slim, who knew always what lay beyond, would ride

back along the serpentine string of wagons and warn the travellers of the road ahead.

Descending steep declines, they twisted long withes into the wagon wheels to check their momentum. The stony, precipitous trails fell perilously. The weaker horses and the more fragile wagons had to be guided lest they should topple over the embankments. One at a time, the wagons would be drawn to the summit of the steep hills by double teams, men following with sticks of wood to trig the wheels when the panting animals needed rest. If an ascent was especially precipitous, even the women and children would pile out, scamper ahead, laughing, running, playing, enjoying the adventure of the wild, mountainous country, drinking in the chill, crisp fragrance of the opening spring.

Some days were uneventful. Ten, twelve hours of jogging along, eyes always westward, were easy and pleasant in the morning with the sun at the back, but it lulled them into drowsiness as the day wore on and they stared into the blinding glory of the setting sun.

Each night the train formed into a great circle around a roaring camp-fire. The horses were tethered to stakes driven into the ground and the men took turns watching and guarding them. The women cooked the supper in utensils taken from the wagons. Porridge, corn in various styles, smoked meats occasionally, and, for the more provident, dried and preserved fruits, carefully prepared back home, were appetizing after the long, hard afternoon's work. Emma was always the recipient of precious titbits, and she became adept in smuggling them on to the poorly nourished children who constantly haunted her wagon.

Often settlers, seeing their fires at night, would join them, bringing offerings of fresh meat, a bit of butter, or a pot of honey. They listened wide-eyed to the meaning of this caravan—the wonders of the Mormon religion, the miracle of the Land of Promise. It happened several times that some of these visitors followed, overtaking them in a day or two to throw in their lot with the steady, relentless march westward.

These evenings about the glowing camp-fires were happy ones. They sang the old songs of their first countries and the religious hymns of their recent faiths. Emma loved these evenings. The sad but beautiful melodies of "*Wie kann Ich Dich verlassen*," "*Wenn die Schwalben heimwärts fliegen*," and "*Verlassen, verlassen, wie ein Stein auf der Strassen*," filled her with ineffable kindness towards these rough but sympathetic people. She was surprised at first to hear her own voice, hesitating but eager, singing "*O come, all ye faithful*," and "*Annie Laurie*." She had not sung since she left Harmony—she who had had taken singing

lessons, who had led the church choir, and who had been called upon to give solos at the parties in the great stone house.

The campers were admiring and deferential; they urged, begged her to sing alone. At first, shy from five years of loneliness, she hesitated, but at last relented. Slim Shanks, who sat in the shadows with a watchful eye on man and beast, would edge nearer when Emma began. Always he asked for the same song, "Do they think of me at home?"—a popular sentimental ditty that Emma sang with great feeling:

Do they think of me at home? Do they ever think of me?
I who shar'd their ev'ry grief, I who mingled in their glee;
Have their hearts grown cold and strange To the one now doom'd to
roam?

I would give the world to know, Do they think of me at home?

Do they think of me at eve, Of the songs I used to sing?
Is the harp I struck untouched? Does a stranger wake the strings?
Will no kind, forgiving word Come across the raging foam?
Shall I never cease to sigh, Do they think of me at home?

Do they think of how I loved In my happy, youthful days?
Do they think of him who came, But could never win their praise?
I am happy by his side, And from mine he'll never roam,
But my heart will sadly ask, Do they think of me at home?

Yes, Emma's new life had begun. Back there in the prison at Palmyra she had reached a decision just before the New Year. She was no longer afraid. She knew what she wanted and she had determined to come into the new world—the great West—to find it. But she had not gone far before she began to realize her dreams, her determinations. They, in fact, had come running to meet her, joyously, on the trail. She took it as a good omen that in addition to her first friend, Dora, she had found seven others who were to have babies "before snow flies." There were to be children in the Promised Land . . . and friends . . . good, simple, adventurous folk, who, like herself, wanted to start life anew.

So Emma looked ahead and found life good. She loved the excitement of that westward march. She loved the people, the spirit of sharing. She loved the long, sleepy, rumbling days in the open. She loved the communal life about the watch-fires. She loved the hour alone before she slept, when, gazing into the starry heavens, she thought over the events of the day.

If, sometimes, into her mind there crept the shadow of the Prophet, smiling insolently, carelessly, upon these simple, trudging souls, she pushed it away. Joe had little reality for her these days, and the Religion of Mormon none. Although the new converts talked at great length about the wonders of the Golden Book, somehow such talk seemed irrelevant. For her, Mormon

—more good—was no longer an emotional ecstasy arising out of visions, miracles, and fantastic revelations, but simply the quiet joy of being alive, human, interested in all of the little personal details that coloured the lives of these natural, warm human beings. If memories, questions, persisted in obtruding, she would say grimly, “Never mind, I can manage—now that I am no longer afraid—now that I know what I want.”

Some days were eventful, too eventful. There was the time the Ordery boy was thrown from his horse on a steep mountain descent. They had been unable to check the horses. The lad was picked up with a fractured leg and crushed chest, and placed in Emma’s wagon, where she cared for him tenderly, until, after an hour’s tortuous winding, the caravan came out on to the valley level and laboured to a grinding stop. There they had bound the leg of the agonized boy in splints. To Jimmy Ordery those hours leading to death were the only precious experience in his drab, starved life. The compassion in the quiet face bent over him, the firm tenderness of the hands that wiped the cold sweat of agony from his face, brought a strange strength to his frail, hopelessly broken body.

At the appeal in Emma’s face Slim Shanks decreed camp, and although it was only two in the afternoon, the train halted. This time they struck camp in silence and waited. The boy wanted so to live! He was coming West with his six-year-old sister, Judy, to seek a new start, a home, a religion, a fortune. The little girl, frightened, crouched near her brother, watching Aunt Martha and Emma do what they could for Jimmy. The lad made an heroic but losing fight. Emma was beside him all night. Shortly before dawn he rallied and spoke to her wildly.

“Sister Emma . . .”

When she leaned over him, there was such profound tragedy in his pain-drawn eyes that she asked tenderly, “What is it, Jimmy? Tell me.”

“Judy?”

Emma understood; she answered unhesitatingly, “I’ll take care of her. She will be my little sister.”

A look of peace flooded his pale, thin face. He tried to speak to her: “Sister Emma . . . Thank you . . . I wish I could . . .”

He did not finish, but Emma seemed to understand. Ever so gently she kissed the boy’s lips. Soon he was gone. How beautiful he was in death. . . .

They buried him at dawn, a grey dawn. Emma’s eyes watched the western sky through a mist of unshed tears. The trail could be cruel! She was grateful for the soft weeping of the rain which covered them all that day.

A week later, near Scrubgrass, they called a halt for three days. The necks of the poor horses were in sad condition from

the rubbing of the wooden hames, and common humanity demanded a rest for the faithful beasts. The men went into the town and threshed grain with flails; the women spun flax and tended the looms in return for food and supplies and hospitality.

Young Hans Brucker, son of the Scrubgrass miller, became so enamoured of Hope Whitam that the parting of the two, after the three days' courtship, was cruelly sad. Hope rode on towards the West, silent, heavy-hearted, despite the efforts of all her friends to cheer her. But the night the caravan reached Pittsburgh, young Brucker, flushed and determined, rode excitedly into camp. There was great rejoicing over the happiness of the two young people. Although there was some confusion about rights, ways and means, and Mormon requirements, Elder Postelwaite, the ex-Methodist preacher of Lyons, said the only marriage service he knew over the pair, and the bride and groom continued on their way, the cynosure of many pairs of friendly, curious eyes.

At Pittsburgh the *émigrés* took boats and had a leisurely, uneventful passage down the Ohio to Louisville. It was the beginning of April. Everywhere soft, tender green suffused the budding trees and silver shrubs. The skies were cloudless and blue. Emma, fascinated by the river life, lived a succession of happy, calm days. She listened while her husband's converts talked. She came to know all their life stories. She began to feel responsible for them, to plan for them. She would help defend them!

At Louisville they left their barges and took the overland trail to Vincennes, Indiana, and then across the rolling prairies to St. Louis. The face of the world began to change. Southern Indiana, with its stretches of waving blue grass, was like a limitless, graceful sea. The road was newer, rougher, slower, but oh, the breath-taking beauty of the infinite, undulating prairie vastnesses!

From day to day, from hour to hour, the country changed, but it was not like the East. Many in the caravan were terrified by the flat stretches. The treelessness seemed to threaten, to leave them naked, unprotected. Aunt Martha, mountain bred, quailed before the bleak openness of the blue grass region.

"We'll either freeze or bake to death out here!" she exclaimed ominously. "No good can ever come of hunting out new places nohow. Folks ought to live where there's trees. I'd like to start right back to the Alleghanies this minute."

But it was the Mississippi and what came after that wedded Emma to the West, for better or worse. When she found herself upon the mighty father of waters, approaching St. Louis from the Illinois side, she knew a rapture deep and profound, which, in later years, became an enduring passion.

And later, on the narrower, fainter Missouri trail, when Emma's covered wagon bravely ploughed its way to the top of the bluff and drew out into the open where the great prairie flowed away to a smooth, even horizon, she felt a lump rise in her throat, and, through tears, her eyes looked on and on. "It is a beautiful, sweet sea. Oh, I'd like to walk into it, bury myself in its green softness." All day she rode, caught in this dream of virgin spring loveliness—large white and purple pasques; fresh, young violets; great hosts of red lilies; and strange, woolly, yellow flowers, growing riotously among the crisp, green grasses. A brisk wind stirred the earth's multi-coloured covering into ripples of changing, wave-like colours. The dome of the sky was April's amazing transparent blue that gave unplumbed depths to the heavens. Soft white clouds hurried restlessly hither and yon at the capricious will of the north wind. Wild geese, upland plover, huge piping cranes made a noisy stir as the little world on wheels bravely cut its way into this shining, bright new land.

Emma's heart beat excitedly and her face was suffused with an overwhelming joy. She knew she belonged. She would get on. With an almost intoxicating eagerness she faced this last stage of the long journey westward. She had come into her Promised Land. Already she had seen its glory. With steady eyes she turned her gaze towards Zion—and on her face was the look of one who finds life good.

Chapter Twenty-two

IT WAS EARLY IN JUNE WHEN THE PROPHET AND HIS WIFE HAD THEIR first breakfast in their new home in the Missouri Zion. Joe finished his coffee, leaned back on the split-bottomed chair, and with a possessive air surveyed the long, clean room with its freshly white-washed log walls.

"The brethren have done a pretty good job for us. Raised her right from the ground in less than ten days. . . . This is a fine long room—quite the handsomest in the whole batch. Rigdon's will look like a hen-coop beside it." He laughed with a characteristic gloating chuckle.

Emma made no answer, but her eyes swept the spacious room with a look of quiet satisfaction. She observed with an appreciative eye its generous proportions, its glassed windows, wide hearth, and arched beams. Joe rose and made ready to leave.

"We'd better get started soon. I want to reach Big Blue by noon. The meeting isn't called till two, but I want to see to that banking business."

"I'm not going with you to-day."

"Not going? What do you mean?" There was sharp consternation in his voice.

"I mean just that . . . I'm not going to Big Blue. I have other things to do here. I'm putting out my plants to-day. It should have been done a month ago."

"But, Emma, I want you to go. We need you at these meetings. You've been quite an addition—you make a fine impression on the doubters."

He stopped short, realizing that he had admitted far more than he intended. But Emma, clearing the table, gave no sign that she had noticed any untoward slip.

"I'm not going with you, Joe. And there will be many other days when I shall not attend your meetings. You might as well get used to that in the beginning."

"What's this sudden decision about? I'm surprised—disappointed. I thought you were going to come along with us . . . all the way. . . . You've been to some of the meetings and everybody has made a lot over you. Thought you kinda liked the idea of being the 'Lady Elect.' "

Sullen resentment and bafflement in his voice caused her to pause in her work, go to him, and say honestly: "Perhaps I do like the honour they show me. The folks here have been cordial, and I expect to do my part—in my own way. But I don't think you have any right to think I've ever been converted. . . . I'll help with the business end. . . . I'll receive the new families, give comfort to the women folk, but I will not proselyte. You have

known that all along, and it will save trouble if you don't try to bully me into it."

Before her direct gaze, his own shifted. Carefully tilting his broad beaver hat over the left eye, he said sulkily, "I'm disappointed just the same. I hoped you'd found your faith on that two-months trek out here to the new world. I hoped you might become a whole-hearted Mormon and earn your title of 'Lady Elect.' "

"A whole-hearted Mormon—like Felicity Turner, perhaps?"

Emma was sorry the moment she had spoken, but Joe answered unperturbed, "Yes, like Sister Felicity. There's a woman with as much education as you've got, but she hasn't let her learning interfere with her spiritual life."

"You don't need me for your meetings, Joe." Emma spoke in a lighter tone. "The converts are flocking in fast enough. How many at Paradise yesterday?"

Instantly diverted, he answered proudly, "Baptized seventy. And there were more than a hundred at Liberty Sunday. How they did flock to the grove! That road was packed with people in wagons and on horse and foot. There hasn't been such a sight in this country—ever! At last we've found the real Jerusalem! We dipped 'em so fast and furious that Hezzie and Sid gave out. Rigdon's had a cramp in his arm ever since." Joe threw back his head and laughed heartily.

"How many converts do you count in all—I mean since you came to Missouri?"

"Oh, about five hundred, besides our own Zion folks. Piatt has the lists, says there're more, but all of them won't stay put. We can count on a thousand paying members by fall, I know. We've sold that many Bibles already. And we've only just begun! We're going to send out missionaries—all over the world. We'll have an empire that'll make 'em all sit up and take notice." He was exultant, frankly boastful.

"How do you do it? I can't understand." Emma spoke half to herself as she studied the sensuous, handsome face of the giant who was her husband. He looked far more like a melodramatic stage hero than a Prophet. It was always with fresh wonder that she realized what he was doing. She stood amazed at the picture he painted: a steady stream of people winding towards him under the spell of the jargon he expelled so sonorously—miles and miles of these people coming, sturdy pioneers pressing forward into his large fleshy hands to be dipped under water in the name of the Lord and Prophet Joe!

Shaking her head a bit ruefully, she continued to watch him as he went swinging majestically down the new path. Then, with a sigh, she turned to the morning's work. Her face cleared and brightened as she took the dry brown plants from the careful

wrappings in which they had travelled almost fifteen hundred miles westward. Holding the precious roots tenderly, she went into the June sunshine to plant them where they would thrive and show to the best advantage.

The past six months had wrought a remarkable change in Emma. One would not have recognized the strong, alert girl darting about in the cheerful red print as the same person who had wandered ghostlike through the Smith house in New York but a short time back. She was heavier and her skin was browned by the wind and sun. On the long trip west she had done the part of a man, thriving on the hardships in spite of feminine limitations.

And there had been hardships—particularly after they left St. Louis. For three hundred miles they had made their way across the vast, seemingly limitless prairies and through trackless wilds of timbered hills. The country through which they passed was deserted, except for wild Indian tribes and a few hardy white people who had come out to seek their fortunes. Although some of these first settlers dressed in homespun for Sunday and festal occasions, their garments for the most part were of dressed deerskin. As Emma rode through one settlement, she noticed that whole families, including women, young and old, were clothed entirely in the skins of wild animals. The life she saw about her—particularly the crude one-room cabins with clap-board roofs, dirt floors, glassless windows, and mud-plastered chimneys—was so primitive that she secretly told herself she should never have left New York.

But spring had come and she was delighted with the new country. The long, graceful sweep of the prairie with its rhythmically moving grasses sang to her; the peculiarly luminous blue of the sky softened her; and the abundance of flowers, shrubs, berries, nuts, gladdened her with their profusion. Already she could see the white blossom of the dogwood and the purple splashes of the Judas tree against the green along the river bluffs. In the warm, beneficent sun Emma grew strong and sure of herself—more like the Emma of Harmony days.

On this June morning, working with her plants, she was happy because she loved what she was doing. A smile played over her face as she tenderly, firmly pressed the moist clay around the brown, scraggly roots of plants. She had saved her favourites to the last, planting them near the door with a vision before her eyes of all their colourful glory months hence.

She rose carefully to her feet and studied her new home with a searching eye. On a beautiful site atop a hill, set between two fine elms, the pine log house, with its sturdy simplicity, struck her as somehow very right in this new country. Chips and shavings still lay scattered about the yard, and the pungent

odour of the freshly cut pine teased her nostrils. She let her eye wander the great length of the three-room house, noting the compactness of its construction. The huge logs were held together with wooden pins which she herself had helped to carve. Emma gazed upon it with pride. It was hers! It had risen under her directing eye, and had made for her in this brief time a reputation as builder. All of the Mormons whose houses were being built on the slope below paid her the tribute of coming to study her house and to consult Sister Emma about their building problems.

Humming a little tune, she went to the door of the house; pausing on the threshold, she let herself be impressed all over again with the spacious dignity of the great living-room. It was thirty by forty feet, with an enormous stone fireplace, above which hung a rifle on the prongs of a sturdy buckhorn. Deer, wild turkey, geese, ducks, quail, grouse—so generously supplied by the prairies and near-by woods—could be roasted on the long crane that swung back and forth over the blazing logs. But she had an oven, too, in her large kitchen. Already she had learned how to grind corn meal on a gritter, separate it from the bran by means of a sieve, and make it into bread, mush, corn pone, or Johnny-cake, which, supplemented with fresh butter, wild honey, and wild fruits, made a delicious evening meal. When the log fire died away at night, she had tallow-dipped candles and iron ladles containing wicks, which, when filled with lard, she could light and stick into the walls. The clay hearth, the puncheon floor, the whitewashed walls, and the rough beams overhead, told the story of her pioneer life, but Grandmother Hale's mahogany bureau, with its richly carved claw feet and handles, dominated the north wall and somehow bridged the distance from Pennsylvania to Missouri.

With the prospect of a long day alone in which to play with her new things, Emma went to the impressive old chest and began unpacking its cavernous lower drawer. She brought forth pewter, glass, brass—things precious to her because they evoked childhood memories of her mother's home back East. Lovingly she unwrapped them, seeing them for the first time since she had run away from Harmony. That was five years ago. How long it seemed . . . how old she had grown . . . yet the time had gone rapidly. Emma reflected on this strange paradox. When she was young and care-free and happy, time moved slowly. It was as if she lived in a timeless world. It seemed then that she would never grow up and become "important" like her mother. Now, in spite of great trials and disappointments, the days, months, years sped by with undeterred haste. . . .

She unwrapped a Dresden shepherdess. . . . Why, this had been her mother's most prized treasure! A coy maid leaning on a

crook and inclining her head to the sly whispering of a rosy cupid—how familiar it seemed! . . . Her mother had sent it to her, put it into the drawer with her own loving hands. . . . Emma sank to the floor, leaned her head against the cool, smooth wood of the chest, and cried a little. “Dear mother . . . I wish I had known about the shepherdess . . . I wish I had written a letter to thank you.”

From the dark pain of that moment she pulled herself determinedly, and began to arrange the lovely things in their places: the candlesticks on the bureau . . . the pewter bowl on that rustic table, a cross section of a huge oak which gave tone and character to that part of the room. She would fill the bowl with wild flowers, but first the pewter must be ranged on that narrow shelf across the fireplace. A red glass honey bowl placed in the window caught the morning light, and she wanted to sing. With all the pretty things arranged, the room had mellowed, warmed, expanded, and pride grew into her heart. The cast-iron skillet and the long-handled spider on the hearth, the split-bottomed chairs, the crude tables and benches were like others to be found in the hundred other homes of Zion. But none of them could boast such a mahogany chest! Such brass! and such china! No other Mormon house harboured a Dresden shepherdess. Why should they? Wasn’t she the wife of the Prophet . . . wasn’t it fitting that she should excel in all things . . . wasn’t she the “Lady Elect”?

Emma sharply checked her thoughts. What was she doing? She felt shame for the ease with which she slipped into such silly pride. How quickly she had accepted the rôle of “Lady Elect”—the honoured wife of the Prophet—and just after she had told Joe this morning how she really felt, too! She must watch her thoughts. One month in the strange new country where everybody worshipped and paid obeisance to the Prophet, and indirectly to her, had gone to her head a bit. But it was a relief to have everyone friendly, to fear no mobs clamouring to “string him up.”

Emma, looking inward, sighed as she realized how susceptible she was to a little admiration. Caught in the warm stream of adulation that continued to flow about her, she began to forget the horrors of her first years in the Smith family and the doubts and worries about Joe’s grandiose schemes. The meetings, the money irregularities, the Revelations, Joe’s increasing belligerence, Rigdon’s growing resentment, yes, even the unfaced question about Sister Felicity—these seemed trivial and unimportant compared with the tremendous story of pioneering.

Without particularly willing it so and without anyone save Rigdon aware of it, Emma’s subtle, unspoken influence extended itself by degrees over the entire life of Zion. To the simple,

kindly, naïvely fanatical Mormons, she in her quiet, dignified, yet sympathetic way became a symbol of the secure, the unchanging. They came to depend upon her, to love her, to bring to her all their little human problems. That she was carrying a child without complaint, asking no quarter because of it, added in their minds to her strength and fitness as "Lady Elect." They did not think much about understanding her; it was sufficient that she was there, familiar, interested, always the same.

She turned back to the dresser, dug far down into the bottom of a large drawer, and brought up a bundle which was soft and yielding. In her hands it fell open—an unfinished baby jacket of pink wool, the needles caught in the tangled skein. The colour left her face as she stared helplessly at the woolly thing. "I was working on it the day that . . . I must have hidden it away in grandmother's chest. Yes, I do remember. I shall not be allowed to forget," she said softly and a little bitterly. The voice was small and sad. It lost itself in the big new room. Suddenly all joy left her. She seemed to shrink and droop. . . .

Unaware of the small bundle in her hands, Emma left the house and walked softly through the pale, June sunshine to her already discovered secret place in the grove that covered the hill. This sanctuary was just a stone's throw from the house, in a natural, circular clearing, surrounded by freshly leafed maples. Here she could be alone—to think, to see, to live. Here she came this June morning—the pioneer woman, fifteen hundred miles from Palmyra, from Harmony—to remember the sorrows of her life, to think order into chaos, to find reason and purpose where none seemed to exist.

As she lay in the soft sunshine she reviewed the hours since she had left Harmony—the elopement, the first night in the Smith house, the weird religious meetings, the strange discovery of the Golden Book, the death of her baby, her curiously double life with Joe, the talk with Rigdon on the Palmyra road, the trial and flight of the Prophet.

"And that was only six months ago!" She spoke aloud, and a squirrel that had been quizzically watching her reverie scampered deftly up a tree. She brought her thoughts back to the present, to the things that touched her now. There, first in her line of vision, was her new home, the clean, spacious cabin in which she would live with the Prophet. A little below it, another, similar but not so spacious, was the home of Ma Smith and the "Patriarch." Still lower on the slope were other homes nearing completion. This was Zion! Here she saw her dream taking shape. The nearest town was five miles away, but the settlers had welcomed them generously. Caravans from many states were on their way.

"It has begun—the new world—the new life! Rigdon was right. It is coming—the wealth, the Power, the Glory! It must come!"

While her eyes, lighted with determined fire, looked far away, her hands absently straightened out the tangled skein of wool and automatically began the knitting of the unfinished baby jacket. . . .

Chapter Twenty-three

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN AUGUST WAS A MEMORABLE ONE IN MORMON history. Long to be venerated as the great "Claim Day"—the day on which the Prophet, in the name of the Church of Mormon, staked claim "on Missouri and all points west, even unto the great Pacific if the Lord so will"—the occasion was widely heralded among the settlers, and "all who love the Lord and want to know His final truth" urged to attend the formal consecration of Zion, "the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of most High God."

The day's opening was somewhat clouded for Joe by Emma's announcement that she would take no part in the ceremonies. Having worked for days to get all in readiness for the event, she quietly refused to appear at any of the meetings. They argued—he bitterly contending that she was a half-loyal Prophet's wife, she declaring that she would carry and bear her child this time as she thought best.

Before leaving for Aunt Martha's, where she planned to spend a day of rest, she turned back to say kindly: "Let us go along in peace, Joe. I will help you where I can, honestly. I'll try not to hinder, but you cannot use me as a public display to further your religion. Please understand that."

When she had gone he paced restlessly about the room. He didn't quite know what to make of his wife. She seemed to be interested in the new religion—at least she left him alone—and she seemed always willing to help him with his problems. But there was something in her restrained, incommunicative manner that baffled and annoyed him. He didn't feel entirely comfortable with her. It seemed to him at times that her searching eyes looked into him, critically examining all that went on within.

Such reflection disturbed him. He didn't like to think about himself too much. Rigdon did that—brooded. It wasn't healthy. He shrugged his shoulders as he dismissed the thoughts from his mind. Pausing before the tin mirror, he looked complacently at the reflection for some time. Adjusting his cravat and drawing his large, heavy fingers through his ruddy hair, he struck a pose as if rehearsing for a public appearance. Pleased with what he saw, his face brightened and he swaggered across the room, pulled out the rum bottle from its hiding-place behind grandmother's chest, and took a long swig. Thus fortified, he went back to the table and appeared absorbed in important business as the Apostles entered.

Joe opened the meeting with a long eloquent prayer to "Almighty God and the Angel of Revelation." In conclusion

he thundered: "Thy latest gospel, the *Book of Mormon*, shall prevail. . . . Yea, it shall, even though we must shed blood for Thy holy cause. We listen for Thy commands. Speak to us, O Lord!"

There was a moment of awed silence; then the bowed heads were raised and all eyes turned towards Brother Rigdon, who, like Aaron of old, was the mouthpiece of the Prophet's latest Revelation:

"To you, My chosen Prophet, Joseph Smith, the Lord sends greetings. You stand now in the Holy City—the Promised Land—the spot where Adam and Eve, when driven from the Garden of Eden, tarried for many years to till the soil.

"Consecrate ye the Temple site on the first Sunday in August, 1831. Build then speedily a temporary structure of whatever material the land now offers for worship. When I am ready I shall reveal My plans for the great and shining monument which will dazzle the eyes of unbelievers, and which will be a source of great pride to you, the Mormons, who will create it from your own stores. It will be the richest and most beautiful building in all America.

"Build ye straightway a general store for the convenience of My people. . . .

"Buy ye lands! Take possession of all that is about Zion. It is meet that there be no barbarians, no infidels, in the shadow of My Kingdom. Therefore, buy ye, or take by any means necessary, in the name of Mormon, what lands ye need for My people now moving westward to this holy spot.

"Establish ye banks to hold the gold and monies by which ye shall conquer. . . .

"I, the Lord thy God, do hereby decree, for the carrying out of My wishes, that all Mormons contribute generously of their wealth to hasten our plans for Zion—to bring quickly the day of our supremacy. From the rich must come much; from the poor, ten per cent. of their income. 'Cast thy bread upon the waters and it shall be returned to you after many days.'

"For the management of the money raised for the Kingdom, I do make you, Prophet Joseph, My first agent, to be assisted, as ye need, by Apostles Rigdon and Piatt. It is urged that all Apostles set a good example for the brethren by devoting their monies to proclaiming My word. Remember the words of Isaiah: 'Surely the isles shall wait for Me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from afar, their silver and gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver.'

"Do ye subdue first your neighbours. Make the Promised Land free of doubters, backbiters, and all hindrances to the successful establishment of the faith of Mormon. Even as ye carry out

these commands shall ye be blessed, yea, ye and thy seed made powerful. Amen."

During the announcement the Prophet studied the intent, listening faces of his Apostles. Tunk—small, avid, worried—was undoubtedly doing land sums in his head, trying to calculate the time needed for the return of some of his "power" in the form of dollars in the bank.

He next scrutinized Lem Turner's credulous, childlike countenance. His sparse hair made his low, narrow forehead seem almost obscenely naked. With his pale, watery eyes, small, thin mouth, and foreshortened chin, he seemed to Joe's scarcely concealed scorn an abject, pitiable fellow. No wonder Felicity was such a powder mine.

With the thought of Felicity, Joe's nerves began to twitch, and he wished he had put the bottle where he could get a swig. . . . With an effort he dragged his mind back to the Apostles.

The survey brought him satisfaction until his eyes came to rest on Rigdon; here he felt a sense of resentment, even of danger. Of late, Sid had changed greatly. His narrow face was thinner, more deeply lined; the thin mouth, tighter; the penetrating eyes, more feverish, oftener veiled. His body, ever tense and erect, seemed tired and in pain. The chanting, sustained voice with which he read this morning was clear, exact, seemingly inspired, but Joe saw that the delicate, slender hands holding the papers trembled. He needed a woman, Joe concluded, but there was too much Baptist in him for that. . . . An invalid wife for eighteen years . . . God, what fools some folks are. . . . Now there was Frieda Behr . . . Joe remembered Kirtland, Ohio, and the slow, voluptuous glances with which the blonde girl had enveloped Sidney. But the damned idiot probably didn't do anything about it! Now that the girl was here with a young husband who looked as if he might take care of her, there seemed little chance for Rigdon.

Joe's worries concerning Sid, however, lay in another direction. His Apostle had been stubborn about the bank revelation, had actually opposed it at first. Joe even courted the idea of kicking him out, but he came to the inevitable conclusion that he couldn't afford to lose him. He needed his brains, for a while yet anyway. Besides, why should he worry? he knew how to take care of him. . . .

Rigdon's reading at this first formal conference of the Prophet with his Apostles established a far-reaching policy for the Mormons. All questions raised concerning the *modus operandi* were settled by Joe or Sidney. To-day there was only one moment of controversy. Apostle Hurlbutt had said, "The folks around here tell me we can't have a bank—that the Missouri law won't let us."

Rigdon spoke up quickly: "We are entering into negotiations with the authorities, Brother Hurlbutt. We have every intention of complying with the law. Everything will be legally correct. You must so tell the settlers." He added nervously, "It is imperative that we check any unpleasant rumours, and if our bank plans do not meet the requirements of the laws of Missouri . . ."

"Requirements be damned," Joe burst forth belligerently. "I speak piously, brethren, in righteous indignation. The only law we acknowledge is God's law, the law of His Revelation. Am I right?"

"Yea," they assented, dreading the Prophet's stormy temper.

"Of course I am. We'll have our bank. And if the law of Missouri won't print our greenbacks, then we'll print 'em ourselves," he shouted. "The Lord has told us what to do and He has promised to look after us. You do as you're commanded and I'll take care of the rest."

Rigdon's dark face flushed, tightened. His eyes sent out quick shafts of hatred, and he seemed about to speak, when Joe, turning upon him, said in oily, mocking tones, "Our Brother, Sidney Rigdon, does sometimes seem to lack in faith. It is his one great fault. In my Revelations there have been frequent references regarding this matter. Recently the Lord suggested that Brother Rigdon's case be made a matter for conference among the Apostles, but I don't like to humiliate one of our brethren, and I begged the voice to delay, to give our Brother opportunity to bring his prideful spirit into harmony with our commands." Addressing Rigdon directly, he went on in diabolically dulcet tones, "But if he prefers, we can give the case a full discussion this morning." He waited. Rigdon looked into the coarse, cruel face of the Prophet and lowered his flashing eyes.

"I stand corrected. You are always right."

The deadly irony of the simple statement was lost on all save Joe, who did not care. He had enjoyed torturing Sid, and his mood changed immediately to one of exuberant good humour. Over his docile band he prayed with fervent, exultant assurance, beseeching God to bless them and make them as princes in Israel.

Before the meeting adjourned Prophet Joe called on Brother Turner to "speak in tongues."

Lem rose slowly, hesitated, and in confusion stammered, "My faith fails me—I haven't faith enough."

Joe was insistent. "You have! Speak in the name of Jesus Christ, make some sound as ye list, without further thought, and God will make it a language."

Lem, after considerable prodding, began to mumble in a half-singing, half-talking manner: "Ak man of son of man ah ne

commene en holle goste en haben en glai hosanne hosanne en
holle goste en esac milkea jeremiah ezekiel. . . .” He sat down
flushed and breathless.

The Prophet commanded him for the inspired wisdom of his utterance and interpreted the mystic words for the wondering Apostles : “The judgment of God will follow the men of this generation ; their tongues will be stayed that they may not utter ; their flesh shall fall from their bones ; their eyes shall pine away in their sockets ; and it shall come to pass that the beasts of the forests and the fowls of the air shall devour them. Amen.”

On that note the conference ended. The Apostles left the Prophet’s house feeling that the purple was about to enfold them. All save Rigdon, who remained and watched with loathing fear as the Prophet swooped down on the rum bottle. Sidney’s hands pressed the table as he sought to regain his composure. Then he spoke in a clear, cold voice, devoid of emotion.

“Will you look over the Revelation I have finished for the service this afternoon? I think perhaps you yourself had best give it to the people direct to-night. It may have more weight for the strangers who do not know either of us.”

Joe grunted approval as he tilted in his chair, his feet on the table, the rum bottle in his hand. Rigdon turned and left the house.

Chapter Twenty-four

CLOSE TO FIVE THOUSAND DESCENDED ON ZION THAT DAY. MOST of them were farmers, Yankee farmers, homesteading their stakes or working the land recently purchased from the Government. They had belonged to churches back in New England before they came West. Religious revivals were not new to them. Some could tell tales of great camp meetings in Ohio, where thousands "got religion in jerks and swoons and fits." Many had already fallen under the spell of the peripatetic preachers who, travelling on horseback and carrying their saddle-bags brimful of hymn-books and Bibles, had followed the settlers into the lawless frontier country, where the first services had been held in the cabins of the settlers.

Whatever their limitations, these earnest, God-fearing preachers, living in poverty and single-minded devotion to their faith, exerted almost the only civilizing influence on the wild, intemperate life of the frontier. The meetings they held provided, among other things, a kind of social atmosphere so sorely needed by these people who had cut themselves off from the ties that bound them to their former homes, churches, traditions.

The frontier has ever proved rich territory for religious enthusiasts. There people felt the need for some emotional outlet against the harsh brutality of the woods and hills and plains—need for some supernatural protection against the ever-imminent and lurking dangers of the unknown wilds, against red men, lawlessness, disease, and long bitter winters. A barn or a stump and a passion to talk were all a preacher needed to get an audience. But the religion that drew and held them was the exciting, promising kind—plenty of hell-fire and damnation to shake them and an abundance of miracle-working anecdote, with celestial visions of golden streets and pearly gates, to let them dream themselves into forgetfulness of the mud floors in their log cabins and the fatal fever in the fetid swamps.

Working themselves into an emotional frenzy, they could forget poverty, sickness, death. Hence the great popularity of John the Solitary, who claimed three hundred thousand converts and four thousand clergymen for his religion during the thirty years preceding the advent of the Mormons into the prairie country. Hence the dramatic success of the Free-Will Baptists, Seventh Day Baptists, Hard Shell Baptists, Soft Shell Baptists, Glory Alleluia Baptists, Winnebrennerians, Disciples, Shakers, Rapites, Come-Outers, Live-Forevers, Restorationists, Universalists, Separatists, Perfectionists, and Methodists, who thundered their righteously indignant warnings of the Fall of Man and the Day of Judgment into the conscience of the pagan West.

And the West welcomed any and all Messiahs. Just as the frontier had rejected New England in politics with the rise of Andrew Jackson, so in religion it turned to a creed that expressed its rough and dangerous life. The Sermon on the Mount was all right for Bostonians, sitting at ease in their snug, austere churches, but a brimstone hell, a Golden Bible, and tons of buried silver appealed far more to pioneer minds, whose intelligence had been blunted by the awful monotony of physical hardship.

Many of those who journeyed to Zion that August day in 1831 were lonely, homesick settlers. Ground down by the bitter struggle of wresting bread from the recalcitrant virgin soil, nostalgic for the neighbourly companionship of the well-remembered prim meeting-house in New England, thirsty for colour, for some sort of emotion that would lift them above the deadening level of grinding, isolated poverty, they came, trudging patiently like children, frankly asking to share.

There were a few, however, who had minds of their own, but who were curious and willing to hear what the new-comers had to offer. Such a one was Adam Roley, a Campbellite parson from Liberty. He brought with him young Dr. Starr and Jimmie Thomas, a lad of eight, who for months had been suffering with a badly swollen arm which had resisted the leech and herb remedies applied by the village mothers. With Dr. Starr the Reverend Roley, a simple, sincere man, sought out the Prophet in his home and presented Jimmie.

“Mr. Smith, we hear you have power from the Lord to perform miracles—to lay on hands—and we have come to seek your help. This boy is a good lad, and his ailing arm is a great sorrow to his mother, who needs his help on the farm. We know nothing save what we have heard, but our prayers will be with you if you can cure this boy.”

Joe looked at the group with interest. He had heard of the Reverend Roley, of his faithful following at Liberty, and of young Dr. Starr, who had great skill with fevers and maternity cases. He could use these men. He coveted their services, but the situation wanted care.

Giving each of them a hearty, stinging hand-clasp, and greeting them in the deep, throaty voice of his best prophet manner, he reached down and lifted the staring Jimmie on to the big table. Careful not to touch the arm in the sling, he smiled at the boy and began telling him a dramatic story of a personal encounter with the Indians. The youngster was captivated by Joe and quite willing, at the Prophet’s suggestion, to leave his friends for part of the day.

Before Joe surrendered Jimmie to the Reverend Roley in the afternoon, he had won the boy’s promise to do exactly as he told

him at the meeting—not to cry out, but to be a man—and to remember that his arm was *not* sore, that it did *not* hurt. Jimmie had to be torn away from the Prophet, this giant, whose voice laughed and whose pocket was filled with candy.

Joe, encountering Rigdon later, said, "Better get Parson Roley and Dr. Starr. They're ripe, but need logic—your kind," he added with the mocking sneer with which he always acknowledged Rigdon's superior mental faculties. He was shrewd enough to recognize the influence of Sid's educated manner on "the gentry." While hating him for his superiority, he nevertheless made use of it, and for this use he was willing to allow his ego to suffer.

About noon the feasting began. Apostle Hurlbutt, who had been a butcher in New England before he became a blacksmith-tin pedlar-preacher, was in charge of the barbecue pits. Great trenches had been dug and filled with logs the day before; at midnight the fires along the trenches had been lighted, and now above the embers roasted a vast number of carcasses of young lambs and quarters of beef. For hours, as long as the supply lasted, the strangers filed past the crude log tables, where Mormons with long knives played hosts over the luscious, smoking meats. In return the settlers brought their prairie-learned gifts to the Mormons—pots of savoury samp and succotash, the mainstay dishes of the frontier. The samp was made of the best corn, carefully ground and freed of the finer meal. The cooking of it in a great iron pot over a slow fire took all day. The succotash, called "smokum-tash" by the Indians who originated it, was a delicious compound of corn and beans. Perch, bass, pickerel, mullet, and catfish from the neighbouring spring-fed lakes; wild turkeys and geese, grouse, quail, and duck; fried corn bread, pumpkins, apples, wild plums, dried fruits, nuts, wild honey, and the inevitable jugs of cider rounded out the ample and eagerly consumed feast.

With Emma's absence, Ma Smith queened it for the day, wringing from the unprecedented excitement the last drop of prestige due to her. Her continued loss of influence was a source of bitter, brooding sorrow to the ageing woman. Joe and the two older brothers paid less and less attention to her. Pa went his own ineffectual way and the younger children ignored her. To-day, however, Ma, now the Matriarch, caught frantically at the sweet wings of fame. She felt awkward in the new black silk dress and her shoes pained her, but she wore them heroically, as she went about introducing herself to all who had the patience to listen: "I am the honoured mother of the Prophet"—"The Lord chose me to bring him into the world"—"Yes, I bore him, and no man was his father, he was conceived by the Holy Ghost. . . ." Wherever she found an audience she dilated fer-

vently on this theme or told the marvellous stories of her son's powers to locate hidden treasures, to cure the sick, to raise the dead. . . .

The religious services began in the middle of the afternoon with the breaking of the ground for the Temple of Zion. After a brief introductory ceremony the Prophet gazed into his peck-stone, then began walking about the hill until, halting suddenly, he cried out, "It is here. About this holy spot shall the sacred portals rise to the East."

As the gaping crowds pushed in about them, Apostle Tunk dug a hole directly under the left toe of the Prophet's boot. Solemnly the other Apostles advanced, bearing a sapling, the word *Zom* (meaning Zomas, the original of Zion) carved into its sides. This they proceeded to plant to an accompaniment of words chanted by Apostle Rigdon: "Thou hast spoken, O Mighty One, and on this spot which Thou hast designated, we stake Thy claim. Here shall be built Thy Temple. Lo! it shall be a shrine worthy of Thy magnificence. It shall be builded as Thou shalt direct; of rich marbles shall the walls be; of silver, gold, and precious jewels its altars; and the streets of the city shall be paved with gold. This spot signifies the beginning of Thy new empire, which shall extend over the face of the entire earth if Thou so will it. Thus, we consecrate it for the Temple of Zion, as revealed to Thy one and only Prophet, Joseph."

From the Temple site the Prophet and his Apostles, followed by the great crowd, proceeded to a near-by grove, where the service was to be held. As the church dignitaries climbed on to the crude platform, all who could get in reach of the speakers' voices crowded in and prepared to make themselves comfortable for an extended session. The services opened with a long prayer by Brother Sidney. It was really a sermon addressed beseechingly to the Almighty. Rigdon was never in better form; the eloquent words that fell from his lips constructed in fabulous detail such a picture of earthly and celestial glory as the settlers had never before heard. It couldn't be true! Yet the Apostle seemed sincere. Their minds were already eager for more.

After the prayer came songs, led by Apostle Piatt. Voices, rusty and hesitant from long disuse, began timidly; then with growing confidence lifted themselves in tremulous joy into the open air. The day was clear and warm, heavy with the smell of the earthy prairie dryness of early August. The people had feasted and drunk heavily of a cider not altogether soft. Accustomed to long periods of complete isolation, the settlers found themselves suddenly, excitedly close to crowds of people. Raw, lusty men touched shoulders with strange young women, whose bodies seemed subtly different from those of their wives, who, through years of habitual familiarity, had lost the allure of

mystery. And women, feeling tense, desirous eyes upon their swelling bosoms, so closely modelled by the "Sunday dress," responded with a wave of colour over a wind-bronzed throat. The familiar songs, sung with increasing abandon, stirred pulses and lifted sluggish hearts into religious fervour.

As pants the hart for cooling streams
When heated in the chase,
So longs my soul, O God, for Thee,
And Thy refreshing grace.

Sidney Rigdon, singing absently, getting his mind ready for his speech, felt eyes upon him. Against his will he turned and looked into Frieda's unveiled gaze and then found it difficult to turn away. It seemed to him that all of the five thousand must have heard her shouting, "I want you again. Why don't you come?" His hands trembled; the heat suddenly became oppressive; his agitation slipped almost beyond control. There sat the woman, his temptation, beside her new husband, and he could think of nothing but a girl in a white shift on a large bed, reaching over to pinch out the light of a candle. God! how his heart hammered—and now he must speak. . . .

He did—with greater power than ever in his life. The unsteady vibration of his voice in the beginning was attributed to his sincere fervour. A hush fell over the oddly assorted assembly. The intensity of the multitudes in the quiet of the afternoon sunshine, straining towards the small lean man whose rolling words came forth in such beautiful cadences, spread even to the farthest outskirts of the crowd. Those who could not hear the words caught their spirit. They were awed. They had never heard such preaching—and he was not even the Prophet! Only one of the Apostles! What a religion! They felt stirrings of ecstasy, the anticipatory thrill of giving themselves up to something as new and as miraculous as this.

He finished and Brother Piatt jumped up to lead them in song.

We lift our hearts to Thee,
O Day-Star from on high;
The sun itself is but Thy shade,
Yet cheers both earth and sky.

They sang not to God, but to Rigdon and the shining Prophet!

Parson Roley, seated close to the speaker, drew a long breath when Sidney finished—an ecstatic look on his anxious, naïve face—and turned to his young agnostic friend, "Well, Doctor, that man has the gift of tongues. Surely he is inspired."

But Dr. Starr did not reply. He was far more interested in keeping Jimmie close beside him; although the boy sat quietly,

his eyes intent on the Prophet, occasionally he would eagerly ask, "Now may I go and sit beside him?"

The Prophet rose dramatically in response to Rigdon's breath-taking introduction, which concluded with the command, "Behold the servant of God—a leader greater than Moses, a Prophet greater than Isaiah!" He was greeted with that profound silence which is the deepest obeisance. Into the palpable stillness of the late afternoon Joe threw his words:

"I come to baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." He related the story of the Golden Plates, dwelling particularly on the promissory Revelations of Power and Glory to be awarded to the chosen. "The God of Mormon is a jealous God, however," he cautioned. "While He will give you wealth and power if you accept Him and baptism by fire, He will not tolerate the evils of doubt, scepticism, delay." Then came the oft-told story of his conversion; he emphasized the point that all the old religions are dead, their fires burned out, and concluded with a discourse on the words from Thessalonians: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, that obey not the Gospel."

As he finished, a young woman seated near Dr. Starr sprang into the air with a wild cry and fell forward on the ground, writhing spasmodically. Her head jerked backward and forward, then from side to side with incredible rapidity, so swiftly that one lost all sense of the head as having features. Dr. Starr, horrified, rushed to the woman, but was restrained from touching her by the Prophet, who thundered, "Let the Sister alone! If the Holy Ghost wrestles with her, we must not interfere—and now let us sing, 'Send swift the Angel Avenging, O Lord.' "

When, at a nod from Joe, Apostle Piatt suddenly stopped the song, Joe stretched his large hands towards the hypnotized audience, and climaxed the service in a loud, compassionate, terrifying plea:

"Brothers, Sisters, every one of you must meet God in fire. To-day we offer you the greatest gift of the ages—baptism in the sacred, cleansing flames of Zion. Will you meet Him in eternal salvation? Will you burn away the dross of old, dead religions? Will you be healed of your sins? Will you become rich and beautiful and strong in God's and man's love? Will you glow with the new life? Will you thrill to heavenly ecstasies such as you have never known before? Will you become holy in God, drive evil from the world, and build up a kingdom on earth such as only the pure and devoted can know?"

"Or, will you wait for the avenging judgment of a spurned and outraged God? Will you be stripped, left bare of all you have, consumed in the poison of your own self-inflicted evil, disbelief,

rejection of Zion? To-day you are given your choice. The Lord has spoken. Blame no one but yourself if evil comes upon you. Everyone who hears me to-day has it within his power to receive this magic gift, to come forward for the baptism of fire!

"But if ye refuse," here his voice sank to a sepulchral, agonized rumble, "if ye refuse and go forth blindly into eternal doom and damnation, you will suffer the torments of everlasting torture.

"Will ye come, Brothers, Sisters? Come to the arms of our God, mighty, omniscient, omnipresent, ready to use you for His glory, His truth, His eternal magnificence?"

As he stood waiting for their answer, low murmurs ran through the rapt congregation, which swayed back and forth like a field of waving grain. Women began to sob, calling aloud to God for mercy; strong men wept. From all parts of the assembly, men, women, and children, their faces working in uncontrolled emotion, pressed forward. The Prophet received them under his extended arms as if he would gather them about him. Some burst into shouting and hysterical laughter; others prayed aloud, sobbing and pleading; still others, reaching up to touch the Prophet, uttered weird cries and fell as if lifeless at his feet.

They began to shout to him: "Lay on hands, in the name of God, lay on hands!" Brother Piatt's high tenor voice burst into a plaintive, wailing hymn:

Plunged in a gulf of dark despair
We wretched sinners lay;
Without one cheering beam of hope
Or spark of glimmering day.

Song followed song as some of the sin-stricken dropped to their knees, shuddering and pleading, or let themselves go in wild shouting, physical gyrations, muscular spasms resembling cataleptic fits, and fell to the ground in uncontrollable rapture. The Prophet, master conductor and psychologist, with his finger on the mob pulse, whipped up their emotions at the needed moment with steady persistent suggestion. Dr. Starr watched, contemptuous yet curious, as Joe flogged the throbbing, quivering mass into a swaying, rhythmic response, as terrifyingly insistent as the beat of tomtoms.

Rigdon looked with awe, tinged with revulsion, upon the crazed mass of creatures whom he had helped to prepare for entry into Zion. Frieda had moved away from her husband and stood alone, one hand on a young sapling, watching with a curious, detached excitement of her own. Their eyes met again and held; her lips formed some words which he could not read, and he turned quickly away. When he looked again, she had gone, but the beating pulsation in his blood did not abate.

It was growing dark. Prophet Joe knew it was time to start the march to Pine Creek for the baptisms. He gave Rigdon the signal. Sidney came forward, raised his hand for silence, and spoke:

“Prophet, Master, can you not give us a sign?”

“Yes, yes—a sign! . . . The laying on of hands . . . Great Master . . . Divine Prophet!” came from the excited crowd. Then a hush, while the swaying throng grew quiet, waiting.

Joe turned to Parson Roley, who, trembling, brought Jimmie forward. The child had sat through the three hours scarcely moving. Joe lifted the boy in his strong hands and placed him on a chair where all could see him.

“Don’t be afraid, Jimmie. I’m not going to hurt you.” He took off the bandages, released the arm, all the while looking intently into the boy’s set eyes, and repeating over and over again, “Your arm *doesn’t* hurt you, Jimmie. It is well now . . . understand? . . . well! It *doesn’t* hurt, does it?” The boy shook his head, but said nothing. Joe went on: “Now, Jimmie, all these people want a sign from God, a sign that you and I are His—and we are going to give them that sign—Jimmie, your arm *is* cured—it *is* well—in the name of Jesus Christ I command you to lift it high above your head!”

Looking straight into Joe’s eyes, Jimmie began to raise his arm.

“Come, Jimmie, higher, higher! It *doesn’t* hurt,” Joe whispered with commanding assurance to the little wide-eyed boy, whose tense face, compressed lips, and damp brow gave the astonished Dr. Starr some alarm. At last Jimmie’s arm was raised high above his head.

“There, you see! God’s work be praised!”

Excited murmurs broke forth from the crowd. “A miracle,” “a miracle,” “a sign,” they shouted. Dr. Starr edged closer to the platform.

The Prophet lifted the boy quickly into his arms and returned him to the convinced and joyful Parson Roley, who carried the little hero back that night to a marvelling Liberty. Jimmie’s arm did seem slowly to heal and all in the town except Dr. Starr were swept into Mormonism on the strength of the miracle. The doctor held his peace; he took the position of an honest investigator—for reasons of his own.

The Apostles baptized five hundred and twenty converts in Pine Creek that Sunday evening. Then the Prophet was inspired to announce that the rest would have to wait until Wednesday. The Lord wanted moderation, he said. The fact was that the Apostles were exhausted, and the proximity of so many strange, emotional women had robbed several of the holy men of all their spiritual fervour.

Although many had started home earlier, the banks of the little stream, the woods, and the sloping fields about Zion Hill were covered with people, who, worn out with the rigours of the day, sat or reclined, awaiting their turn in the water; the baptized, too tired to make the first efforts towards home, stretched out on the ground and slept. Some of the young drifted off in pairs into the woods, not to emerge until morning. Families were separated. There was much confusion in assembling their forces when, the dipping having been suspended, there was no longer any reason to tarry.

Finally, the last creaking cart had departed. A red moon came into the sky, casting a sullen light on the trampled hillside. Joe and Rigdon were the last to climb the hill to Zion.

"Are you satisfied with the day's work?" Sidney asked.

"Should say so! This makes all the rest easy. We got 'em all. This here state won't be big enough for us soon!"

"It won't indeed, if you don't learn discretion," Rigdon observed grimly.

Joe was whistling jubilantly—his pace quickened. His day was not yet ended. "What's that you say?"

"Nothing."

Rigdon was tired. He didn't want an argument to-night. The day had been a success for him too. He had scored and was gratified.

"You sent Lem Turner to Big Blue like I told you, didn't you?" Joe asked when they reached the place where their roads separated.

"Yes." Rigdon's voice was cryptic.

"The woman seemed pretty weak. She could never have got there alone in those wet clothes. Well, good-night, Sid. Come over to-morrow and we'll go over the list of converts. Think Hezzie did a good job of collecting 'em." Joe laughed his loose, boisterous, prankish laugh as he turned away from Sidney and started jauntily with his long, swinging stride up the hill towards his home.

But Rigdon, eaten with consuming fire, followed him softly. When, as he expected, Joe, instead of going to his own house, walked into the Turner home without knocking, Sidney stood and watched the closed door, while hate, loneliness, disappointment swept over him. He dropped to a stump and buried his face in his hands.

Chapter Twenty-five

INSIDE LEM TURNER'S HOUSE JOE CAREFULLY PLACED THE LATCH, put up the bar, and stood leaning against the door jamb, laughing at Felicity's startled fright. The night was hot and she had undressed except for the short white homespun shift which came just below her knees. A single candle dimly lighted the shadowy cabin, but as she stood before the open drawer of a chest, Joe's eyes saw her plainly. He took in her slender strength, her white skin, her full bosom against which hung two ropes of black hair, one over each breast.

"What are you doing here?" she whispered anxiously.

"I've come to claim my reward for a good day's work!" he laughed, coming close to her.

Although the burning look he knew well had leaped into her half-closed, cat-like eyes, she backed away from him, her crossed arms trying to cover her bare breasts.

"You shouldn't be here! Where's Lem?"

"Oh, he's safe. I asked him to take an old lady to Big Blue. He won't be back for hours."

Relief came into her face. Her shoulders relaxed under the strong, warm pressure of his powerful hands. "You are sure?"

"Absolutely," he said lightly. "Rigdon just told me he saw him leave. We can have most of the night. . . ."

She lifted her face, softly opened by frank passion, and the man's loose, hot mouth took hers in a long kiss. He released her and stepped back to look at her. Always when they had been together before, there had been darkness, a stealthy entry into her room, or a few minutes snatched at some spot in the woods. Once, when Emma had gone to Liberty, Felicity had come to his bed, but the orphan Judy had been in the neighbourhood and Felicity had been afraid.

To-night he studied the woman in the candle-light with the appraising eye of one who knows horse-flesh and woman's equally well. Slipping the garment from her shoulders, his heavy, grasping hands felt her breasts, then ran down her sides and thighs.

"God, you've got a body like a racer. Never saw a woman with such firm flesh—not an ounce of extra weight on these flanks. . . ."

Felicity winced under the calculating appraisal, but she closed her eyes and tried not to hear the words as she swayed towards the excited man, whose daring, aggressive hands explored her yielding, quivering body with practised touch.

"You're mighty different from Emma," he went on. Felicity thought he must be drunk, for this was the first time he had

ever spoken intimately of his wife. "Now there's a body for you—soft, round, a regular woman's body. But something about your young mare style sure starts the blood pounding."

His voice had grown husky and his rum-laden breath came faster. He grasped her roughly in his arms and carried her to the little bedroom. He took her roughly, viciously, giving full vent to the accumulated lust of a month's abstinence.

It was of no concern to him to know what happened to the woman whose body he ravaged. It pleased him that she was "hot-blooded" because it increased his own pleasure. But he evaded all her efforts to discuss the matter of their irregular relationship. By an ostentatious casualness, he had tried to impress her with the idea that, since he was the Prophet, it was all right. It was as if he said, "I am a law unto myself. It is silly, childish, to question. What I do is right because I do it. Just leave all to me—don't concern yourself."

Finished with her, the Prophet flung himself on his back and was instantly asleep, but Felicity, watching the dull, red moon creep across the square of sky framed by her window, tried to think things through.

"Does Emma know? . . . She has been kind, but sometimes she looks at me with a cold, measuring glance . . . why should I care or be ashamed? . . . he can do what he likes . . . he is different . . . his needs are greater. . . . I am proud to serve him."

"But the others—Ruth Lee and Carman Lamson," whispered a small voice, "how do you feel about sharing him with them?"

Felicity turned her head to study the face of the sleeping man at her side. Viewed in the vague light, in the unprotectedness of sleep, his coarse, sensuous beauty was startling. The mass of red hair curled away from a high, narrow forehead. The long, strong line of the nose and the jutting brows made shadows on the cheeks. The full red lips were open. Felicity, looking at the mouth, felt her blood turn warm and thick. She wished that she might go on looking at him for ever. There was that in her which responded to the strong, rough, even cruel passion of the man beside her.

Moving with extreme caution, she raised herself on her elbow and brought her face close to Joe's, so relaxed, so rough, so warm. . . . He looked very young and helpless, almost like a child, and somehow more human as he slept. She yearned over him, devouring every feature, letting her lips glide just above his face, his throat, his arms. . . . Restless, questioning, vaguely dissatisfied, she lay back, staring into the shadows.

Felicity Turner was about thirty-five. Joe had been the only man in her life. Of course there was Lem, her husband for ten years, but he didn't count. She had been reared in the cramped,

rigid New England home of her virgin aunts, and her dark, passionate nature had sought in the dubious joys of religion an outlet for her incessant seeking. Encased in the tight-laced *mores* of family, community, and church, she had turned to marriage, hoping that the ceremony by some alchemy would give her joy in Lem, the only man with money approved by the aunts. Lem loved her in his way. But he was a mild, silent, unemotional man. Felicity had yielded her body for ten years without once feeling an impulse to respond to the dumb, pale-eyed husband who fed and clothed her.

The coming of the Prophet into her life had transformed her world. She had never known the ecstasy, the complete abandon, the overwhelming intoxication of passion such as his. It was as if all barriers had suddenly dropped and she could give herself without restraint to avid desires ever crying for more. The stamp of religion had dulled the first prodding of conscience. The young evangelist's pulpit fervour, the strangeness of the new religion he expounded, the incomprehensible mystery of the Golden Plates upon which it rested, had lulled her into acceptance of their intimacy as part of the revelatory plan. Joe's first conquest, his direct, unequivocal requisitioning of her body had left her no time for quibbling over right and wrong.

"You were intended for me. You are my woman. I was divinely led here for the purpose of finding you. For God's chosen, the old, man-made laws do not hold. Our only duty is to obey ourselves, the desires within us. You believe in me? Then accept. Do not question. Our union is heaven made. Our only duty to others—your husband, my wife—is to see that they do not suffer, for they would not understand the power that directs us on to Glory. We owe this consummation to ourselves for our own development. Come!"

So he had talked to her at first. She had believed because she wanted to believe. Occasionally she suspected that he had used the same arguments with Sister Ruth and Sister Carman, but Felicity had sense enough to reason that if a prophet's peculiar needs gave him a right to two women, then he had a right to two hundred. It would be a matter of temperament, and she sensed that his need was great. The deep drinking of her own passion from his had stifled her old Presbyterian conscience. Life took on a new colour: its drab grey had become brilliant, exotic. She felt vaguely that there was danger, perhaps impermanence, in it, but at least now it was exciting, vital, important. . . .

Later, when she had seen Emma, who was so soon to bear the Prophet a child, Felicity had again felt the stirrings of conscience, had wanted reassurance that her union with the Prophet was pleasing in God's sight, but Joe had been irritated and evaded her timorous questions. Besides, there had never been much

time to talk. Except for brief, passionate moments, she saw him only in public as leader of the Mormons, ruler of Zion, Prophet. . . .

Felicity sighed. "Even though it may be a sin, I'd go on. I can't give him up!" As for Lem and her duty to him, she felt sorry, but what was to be gained by telling him?

After an hour she roused Joe. She was anxious. Lem might return sooner than expected. The huge man in her bed, deeply sunk in sleep and rum, was hard to waken. She shook his shoulders, spoke to him: "It's late. You must get up."

"Huh?"

Joe opened his eyes and looked about stupidly. Pulling himself out of bed, he shook himself savagely in an effort to throw off sleep, and began to dress, without speaking. Relieved, Felicity sank back, watching his sleepy movements. Without a backward look or a word of farewell, Joe stumbled into the other room, where the flickering candle made feeble efforts at life. He was putting on his coat when someone tried the door, and, finding it barred, began to knock. As Joe looked about quickly for a means of escape, he heard Lem's voice calling out for admittance. There was no way to avoid a meeting. He walked without hesitation to the door and opened it.

Lem entering the feebly lighted room, did not recognize Joe at first. Then he stared at him in utter stupefaction, as if struggling to read the situation. Joe, with affected casualness, was the first to speak.

"What the devil are you doing here? Weren't you ordered to Big Blue?"

"I went—that is, I took the woman part way."

"Part way? What do you mean? Did you leave her by the road to die?" Joe's tone was brusque, authoritative, belligerent. He stalled for time.

"No. We overtook some neighbours of hers, so let them take her on."

"Well . . . yes, yes. You did quite right." Joe started for the door, but Lem, suddenly aware of the implications of this late visit, came to life and called out:

"Hey, there . . . what are you doing here?"

Joe paused for a moment as he turned. "'Hey there!' Is that the way you address me, Brother Turner?"

"I want to know what you're doing here, in my house, at this hour of the night?" Lem's weak eyes and flaccid face hardened as he advanced towards Joe. "Is my wife in there?" He pointed towards the inner room.

Joe's answer was a shrug of the shoulders. "What's the meaning of all this, Prophet Joseph?" Lem's thin, piping voice rose sharply and quivered with a strange fear.

Slowly Joe came back into the room. He felt that he had better face the situation. Get it settled once and for all. Damn the woman, letting him sleep. One minute more and he would have been safe. He struck an insolent pose, and, looking down upon the small man, asked pointedly:

"What would you take it to mean, Brother Lem?" There was a long silence as the two men glared at each other.

"You don't mean that . . . that Felicity—you and my wife?" Lem shut his eyes and his voice broke. "No, no . . ."

He turned away from the towering, mighty man, fell into a chair beside the table, and began to cry like a timorous, frightened child.

The Prophet watched the thin, shaking shoulders with contempt. Felicity, clothed, appeared at the door, but Joe with a peremptory gesture sent her away, and she quietly disappeared back into the bedroom. He then lighted another candle, placed it on the table, and took a chair opposite Lem Turner, who lifted a face pathetically twisted with grief and fear.

"I can't stand it . . . I can't. Take my money, yes, my farm. . . . I gave up a lot for the Religion—I didn't mind that—but Felicity . . . I can't give her up."

"You don't have to give her up—entirely." Joe had regained his self-possession.

"But I don't understand! If you love my wife, won't you——" He was confused, baffled. "But you've got a wife—a beautiful one!" In indignation he burst out, "Oh, I know you're the Prophet, but it's wicked. Don't the Lord make adultery one of the seven deadly sins? How can you, a Prophet, do such things?"

Joe let him talk, watching the workings of his mind shrewdly. When Lem could not longer find words to express his feelings, Joe broke in: "One of the Lord's first commands to His chosen is to plant their seed and multiply the earth. We've got to have children, plenty of 'em, to replenish and fortify the ranks of Zion."

"Well, what's that got to do with this?"

"Lem, you're sterile. The Lord has punished or cursed you for some reason. Felicity has been denied the greatest privilege of a woman. Ten years you've had her, but you've given her no child." He spoke with thundering reproach.

Lem, cowed, blinked into the blazing eyes of the Prophet. "But that don't make right what you've done. The Bible says——"

Joe interrupted. "The Bible's commands were for folks two thousand years ago. That's the reason we've been given the Golden Plates, that's the reason for all our changes—our need for education through missionaries. We must correct the false ideas of the old religion."

"But there's nothing in the *Book of Mormon* about this . . ." He shrank from naming the deed again.

"No, because the people aren't ready for it. It's too much for them . . . yet. Only to the brave and courageous few—to those strong enough to follow the light without fear, without betrayal . . ."

Lem's face grew calmer as he struggled to comprehend the justness of Joe's reasoning. The Prophet continued, his voice becoming holy, oily, sad, as he found even himself becoming more and more convinced of the truth of his argument.

"By special Revelation I was commanded to visit Felicity. She must bear a child. It is meet that she conceive by that instrument nearest to the Divine, by His Prophet. Hence my presence here to-night. Felicity acceded with great reluctance and only because she knew it was her duty to obey the command."

"You mean . . . Felicity was commanded? She will have a child—by Divine will?" Lem's face was wistful and incredulous.

"Yes . . ." Joe hesitated only a moment. "Yes, if the spirit of all concerned—you, your wife, me—is right, there will be a child."

"What about Emma—does she know?" Lem asked naïvely.

"Well, not yet. . . . She is with child. The Angel will advise us of the right time to inform her. But now her condition . . . That is the important thing, Brother Turner: to beget these children for the glory of Zion. Will you do your part?"

"I don't know as I can or not, Brother Joseph. This is the hardest thing you've asked me to do," Lem confessed.

"You've been made an Apostle, Lem. You're in the advance guard—one of the very few who's been let into the Revelation regarding the replenishment of Israel's children. If you aren't sure in your faith, if your courage won't stand this first sharp test, then you'd better leave us while there's time."

"Would you give me back my money?"

Again there came over Lem's face the naïve expression of childlike wondering about the rules of this strange religion. Joe repressed an impulse to laugh uproariously.

"No. It isn't mine to give. You consecrated that money to the Lord."

"Well, I guess there's nothing for it but to try and stick," the little man sighed with resignation. "Will folks know about you—about whose baby it is, I mean?"

"No. We won't be asked to divulge the paternity. God's command is for the utmost secrecy—until the time is ripe for Mormons to receive the Revelation."

Joe rose to go. His parting injunction was delivered with solemn warning. "You must not, on penalty of death, tell one word of our conversation to-night to a soul. I feel that you will

be strong and faithful, Apostle Turner, and I predict a great future for you as a leader in the church."

Lem sat long at the table where Joe had left him. He often glanced fearfully towards the bedroom door, but it gave no sign to him. At last he made himself a bed on the bench and, utterly weary, stretched out his thin, stiff legs, crossed his scrawny hands on his breast, and at last found sleep.

Joe, climbing the path to his own house fifty rods away, reflected on the precarious situation he had just been through. It was a damn close call . . . a good thing that Lem was a nit-wit! He could recall some husbands that would have raised hell and not given him a chance to give 'em the "multiply thy seed" Revelation. Well, he'd got into it now and he'd have to go the limit. It would be a tough nut to crack, though. Especially with that damn cold fish Rigdon, and the Methodist parsons who'd joined up with them. Hezekiah would be for it. . . . He smiled confidently to himself. These were complications, but they were part of the game. There was no reason why they couldn't be met just as all the others had been met. . . .

At his own door he paused, took the last long drink from the bottle in his pocket, glanced casually at the moon riding high overhead, and lifted the latch. . . .

Chapter Twenty-six

AFTER LEAVING JOE, RIGDON HAD SAT FOR SOME TIME WITH HEAD bowed in his hands, giving himself up to the conflicting emotions that struggled for domination. His body was weary to the point of twitching, and his brain whirled with thoughts diverse and bewildering. Zeal, ambition, pride, fear, coloured these thoughts, and through them all, an unconscious motif, there ran the tugging, insistent despair which more and more these days overwhelmed him. . . .

"Why am I so restless, so dissatisfied?" he thought. "The results of the meeting to-day are excellent. Our plans have been realized far beyond my first dreams. In the beginning I did not dare conceive of success in such magnitude." Figures ran through his mind. "New York, Ohio, Missouri—must have about five thousand right now, and with the titles on all property represented, we can count on an income of at least \$50,000 next year. Should pay for our ten thousand acres all right." He lifted his head, forgetting fatigue as the little yellow gleam played in his eyes. "Ten thousand this year, double that the next year. . . . Must get a printing press started. What we need is publicity. . . . Print the Revelations and some of the sermons—my own—if I can only control that drunken fool!"

At the thought of Joe, weariness and resentment overcame him again. In his mind he pictured the Prophet entering Lem's house. . . . Those two were together now—Joe, with his brutal strength, holding Felicity's slender body. . . . He saw them in bed and the thought sent the blood pounding again at his temples. He stirred restlessly, lifting his lean, heavily lined face to the sky.

Drawing a deep breath of the piney fragrance of the night air, there came with it the peculiarly sharp, pungent scent that clung about Her that one night in Kirtland. She said it was thyme. He closed his eyes, remembering how she had looked then—and this afternoon.

"God cure me—save me from this everlasting temptation!" he groaned.

Why had the girl come to Zion? He had withstood all other women, kept his vows to his fragile wife, until Frieda . . . Why, she was only a child! It was sinful. Would God ever forgive him?

A hand fell on his closed eyes and passed caressingly over his face. There she stood. He peered at her in the eerie light as if she were a vision.

"I've looked everywhere for you, Sidney," she spoke tenderly. Her warm, masculine voice had a weird music of its own.

"Frieda! You aren't real. You're at home, with your husband!" He couldn't move.

For answer she took his hand, drew him to his feet, and led him away from the open path into the protecting shadows of a partially built house. There she paused, stood close, her arms encircling the miserable man. The scent of thyme, so like the piney odour of the night air, came again to him from the soft, warm breast upon which she pressed his head. For a moment he rested there. It was peaceful, heavenly rest, to let his head lie so. It could not last, but for this moment he would cease being who he was to give himself up in blessed contentment.

"Why do you avoid me, Sidney?" she tenderly reproached him.

"You know—we sinned! Only by repentance can that sin be wiped out."

"This can't be sin." There was silence. Then, "If it is, I am willing to pay."

He did not answer. She kissed him, with slow tenderness at first, then her lips on his hungry mouth sent them clinging into each other's arms. She is a strange child, he thought, passionate, yet delicate—not at all like her people.

"Why did you marry?" There was a note of hurt in his voice.

"I am going to have a child. You have a wife. . . . There was nothing else to do."

Rigdon drew away from her, but leaned close to her face as if studying it to discover the meaning of the words.

"A child? Yours and . . . mine?"

"Yes." She spoke simply, quietly, happily. "Don't be sorry. I shall be glad, if you are."

"Your husband . . . does he know?"

"Of course not," she replied in surprise. "He will think it is his. That's why I married right away. There was no other way to protect you, to come on to Missouri with the rest of them. . . . And I had to come!"

When she would have embraced him again, the man drew away in horror.

"My God, I am being punished! Child! You don't know what you are saying. To my sin of adultery and seduction, now there is added your deception. We shall be found out, and that will be the end for me."

He had grown agitated. Grasping her shoulders, he spoke to her with vehement intensity. "Frieda, go home to your husband. For God's sake, don't try to see me! We must let no one suspect what you have told me. Don't follow me about. If anyone finds out, we shall be ruined, both of us!"

The girl clung to him, pleadingly: "Don't leave me this way. The nights are awful. I am so lonely out here in this country. I

came because of you. If I could just see you—talk to you. You weren't like this there in Kirtland. I thought it would be the same out here. Oh, Sidney, I love you. What shall I do?"

Her hands were a torment to him, but sternly he cast her off, speaking with a halting attempt to reassure her: "Go now. I'll see you soon—talk to you about it all. But now—go, for God's sake! Some one might find us! Your husband may be out looking for you now, at this minute!"

Just then the moon came out, flooding them both in its light. Rigdon, arrested, caught his breath at her beauty. Her fair skin and yellow hair gleamed like silver. Her firm straight body stood quiet—tragic in its simple misery. She looked like a statue, lost from its home in this primitive place.

Long-forgotten emotions stirred in the curious soul of the man—legends of dryads, wood nymphs, a picture of Daphne earth-bound to the myrtle tree—tales that had tortured him with their charm when he had read them in his youth—tales whose unchristian beauty had haunted him through the feverish years of struggle to achieve great leadership in religion. Upon the pagan he had shut the door, but to-night it opened just for a moment, and he felt a sense of wonder that such things could be. . . . For that moment only he forgot his dreads.

Lifting Frieda's face to study its beauty, he saw that her eyes held unshed tears. He kissed her gently and spoke to her in a voice and manner that he himself could hardly recognize as his own.

"Go, my child. God bless you!"

Until her figure disappeared among the trees he watched her. Then, slowly, he walked back to the main path leading up to the Temple site. Held softly in this oddly delicate mood, Sidney stood still for a moment, quietly letting nostalgic memories of youth flow over him.

He recalled hours spent in an atheist uncle's library in Boston; it was there he had discovered Greece, Rome, Egypt. Even now he recalled the sense of secret sin with which he had read the heathen lore. Yet he had loved it. . . . His parents, now long dead, had sent him into the ministry and he had obeyed. Was it possible that he had made a mistake—that he had lost something which now could never return to him? With a deep, troubled sigh he shook his mind free of such alien disturbing thoughts and stepped into the open street near the Turner home.

To his horror he saw Lem trying the door of his cabin. Fearful of violence, he ran towards the house, but when he had come within a short distance, he hesitated. How could he explain his presence there at this hour of the night? Perhaps he had better slip away—let Joe get himself out as best he could. On the other

hand, if there were violence, if one of the men were killed, it would ruin all his hopes and plans.

He saw Joe open the door and Lem enter. In a cold sweat of anxiety he made his cautious way to the cabin and pressed his ear close to the door. He could hear nothing. Stealthily he crept along the wall to where a faint gleam of light at one high window came through the thick homespun curtain, tacked down against the inserts. The window was slightly raised. After what seemed an eternity he heard Joe's surprised voice demand, "What the devil are you doing here?"

As Sidney listened, straining to follow the amazing conversation, he forgot that he was eavesdropping in a manner most unapostolic. Disgust and resentment were soon lost in astonishment and alarm when Joe's flagrantly perfidious scheme became clear to him.

"The man's selfish lust has no limit—beast that he is. He will ruin us all!" The last, whispered aloud, startled him into again realizing where he was. The scraping of a chair warned him that Joe had risen. Dimly he could discern the Prophet's shadow beside that of Lem. He was getting ready to leave. Sidney stepped into the darkness behind the house and watched Joe come out, stretch himself with cat-like ease, and swing up the hill.

In that moment Rigdon's mind snapped. All of his suppressed resentments against Joe, the man he had made, all of his gnawing fears for the safety of his great religious dream, leaped into flaming anger. Every vestige of his usually shrewd diplomacy, his sternly disciplined self-possession, fell away in a flood of blinding, white anger. Without plan or purpose he sprang up the path after the Prophet. Advancing upon Joe in livid fury, he cried out:

"You damned scoundrel! If there were any kind of a just God, He'd strike you dead this night."

For the second time this eventful day, Joe, speechless in his amazement, turned from the door, stared blankly, wondering if his sight betrayed him.

"Jumping Jupiter! Another one! In God's name, what are you doing here? It's my own house this time, isn't it?"

Ignoring the levity, Rigdon broke out in anger, his words eating into Joe like vitriol. The Prophet listened, at first stunned, then enraged, but with a sort of grudging admiration withal.

"It may be your house now, but it won't be long if you continue your corrupt and unmitigated deviltry! I have never had any illusions about you, Joe Smith, but my wildest visions of diabolical fiends never conceived that anyone could devise such schemes for the gratification of lust as your vile nature has tonight. I followed you to the Turners'. I heard all you said to

Lem. It can't be, I tell you, and it won't be! I'll kill you before I'll let you wreck all our plans with such unholy abominations!"

Joe raised his eyebrows in mocking surprise, but Rigdon, his voice quivering with rage, went on undeterred.

"In building up this Religion, we've done a lot of things that might be regarded as wrong—deceptive. But I've had a definite end in view. I've thought the end would justify us. We both want certain things: power to build up an empire, to achieve strength, fame! And to get these we have pushed aside many laws. I've agreed because we had to succeed. But this is a different matter. Aside from what I think of your swinish, beastly lust for women—God knows I don't understand it when you have a beautiful wife of your own—" Here Joe again made a mocking gesture of astonishment. "But I'm telling you that such talk as you gave Lem Turner to excuse your adultery with his wife to-night will ruin us! It's got to stop! You almost ruined us when you seduced that young Margaret, and you're not going to make seduction holy!"

His voice had risen to a shrill pitch. His eyes flashed as he shook his fist threateningly in the face of the insolently smiling man, who seemed unperturbed and only mildly amused.

"And how will you stop it, Brother Sidney?"

"I'll expose you! I'll tell the truth! I'll go to the people!"

"But I have the manuscript—the *Spaulding Manuscript*—Brother Sidney. And what would you do if I hand that over to the people? You wouldn't expose my secrets, Brother Sidney, would you? But if you do, I shall expose yours—tit for tat!"

The colour left Rigdon's face. He looked like a man mortally wounded. "You have the manuscript? You said you destroyed it—every page—as we agreed. You wouldn't dare to have kept it."

"Oh, wouldn't I? I wouldn't dare otherwise. Did you think I'd be fool enough to destroy the one means by which I can curb your avaricious ambition, my beloved Apostle?"

His unctuous, dulcet tones poorly masked his gloating pleasure in Rigdon's agony. "Ah, no. Now you understand the wisdom, the foresight of your Prophet. I know your love of fame, my dear fellow. In your eyes I sometimes see you dream of yourself as Prophet instead of Apostle. You'd like to be given credit for all the smart, high-sounding Revelations that flow from your master mind. There are times when you think you might dispense with me entirely—when you feel that the Kingdom of Zion might be yours. My, what a fine One and Only Prophet you would make!" Joe laughed impertinently at the frustrated Sidney. "No, I didn't destroy the *Spaulding Manuscript*."

script. I was warned by the Angel to preserve it in case I needed to subdue any rebellious, over-ambitious subjects. I see the Angel was right as usual."

Rigdon was beaten. He wanted to get away. His voice sounded strangely weak and inadequate when he said, "You may be lying. But you may not. You are a devil and I know that you will probably ruin us all, but—"

"Gentlemen!" The door had opened and Emma stood before them. "Will you stop quarrelling long enough to go and fetch Aunt Martha and a doctor?"

Her voice was weak, exhausted, and she clung to the door as though to keep herself from falling. Even in the dim candle-light the men saw that her face was drawn into a mask of pain, but that her eyes were bright and luminous. Startled by her sudden appearance, neither man moved or spoke.

With a touch of impatience Emma went on: "I called several times, but you did not hear. Hurry, please!" She seemed about to fall.

While Joe dashed down the path to summon the midwife, Aunt Martha, Sidney sprang to Emma's side and half carried her to the great walnut bed. Emma's eyes were closed, her face drawn, and a low cry escaped her compressed lips. Sidney stood over her, trembling, afraid of many things. He thought sardonically: "What a climax to this ugly night. . . . Did she hear our talk out there? . . . She is beautiful—even in pain."

At last, in terror, he whispered, "Is there anything I can do?"

When the seemingly endless pain had passed, Emma opened her eyes and read his frightened thoughts.

"It is all right . . . everything is all right . . . soon I shall have a child . . . then nothing will matter . . . I don't mind the other. Really! Don't look that way, Brother Sidney."

Rigdon had a curious impulse to kneel beside Emma and worship. He was living an oddly alien life to-night. He had never seen a woman in childbirth, and the whole mystery of it transcended the personal. This was no longer Sister Emma, wife of the Prophet. She was a woman, mother of the race. "Woman! Woman!" he muttered and felt a brief moment of release from all grossness and ugliness. He had felt so once before, on a woman's soft breast— Oh, long, long ago—when was it? He couldn't quite remember—long, long ago!

Emma's hand on the coverlet drew his eyes. It was work-roughened, but strong and shapely. A moment before it had grasped the bed to stay her against crying out. Now it lay limp, pathetic, helpless. On an impulse he lifted it and kissed it reverently.

Emma's eyes raised to his in a faint question at the strange, humble act. Although she did not fathom this curious being, she understood that, for the moment at least, Sidney Rigdon was a kindly, tragic man. The tears in his eyes helped her. She gave him a wan little smile of understanding gratitude.

"Please go. I shall be all right . . ."

Chapter Twenty-seven

ZION GREW AMAZINGLY. THE VIRGIN, GRASS-COVERED PRAIRIE SITE which greeted the Prophet in the spring of 1831 had been transformed in seven years into an aggressive, self-conscious metropolis of eight thousand inhabitants. And the city was not unbeautiful to the eye. Wide streets, orderly log cabins, neat lawns, meticulously cared-for vegetable and flower gardens, a gristmill, a tannery, a blacksmith shop, a school, a newspaper, and a large community general store provided the Mormons with many of the comforts they had enjoyed back East. And the surrounding countryside was already dotted with hundreds of little farms for the agriculturally-minded brethren. The Mormon population of the state had already reached ten thousand and new converts poured in every week. To provide for them, Zion ever stretched out its hands for more and more land.

The ease and speed with which the mushroom development was accomplished bewildered even the city fathers. Although the Prophet publicly grasped all the honour to himself (in the name of the Lord and the Church of Mormon), secretly he gave way to astonishment at this unanticipated over-realization of his most sanguine hopes. His ego took another spurt upward and he became increasingly incautious. As he personally counted up the tithe money so trustingly and reverently surrendered to him, he would exclaim, "Well, Brethren, there's enough for all. If this here Missouri don't give us a bank to keep our money in, we'll buy up the whole damn state and send those we don't want straight to hell."

Although some of the Apostles laughed too loudly over the Prophet's "joking way," others who had never grown accustomed to profanity from the man of God carried their complaint to Rigdon, who in turn delivered it to Joe.

The Prophet listened, but his voice was mocking when he replied, "You quiet 'em, Sidney. The very tones of your Boston voice will make 'em forget the coarse vulgarity of Prophet Joe." He dropped his sarcasm as he snarled, "That's your job, ain't it—to keep that bunch pacified? As for me, I'll do and say what I damn please. And I depend on you to make 'em like it. Understand? You may need some more Revelations soon to do it. So you'd better sharpen your pen—and your wits."

He sauntered away whistling. Rigdon's eyes, following him, were fixed with hate—hate for the man who owned him. There had been times, such as this, when it seemed too much to bear, when he had considered leaving the Church. But now with the converts streaming in daily he saw the imminent fruition of the ambition which through years of striving had burned itself into

his soul. No, he could not desert; he could not abandon all that he had planned and dreamed of during the long, difficult years of his youth. He had the Power—at least some Power! He would wait a little longer for the Glory!

Thus Joe Smith and his proselytizing Mormons built Zion. The ardently enthusiastic missionaries, travelling in pairs, radiated from Zion like the spokes of a wheel, carrying fabulous tales of the miraculous religion and of the unprecedented richness of the Land of Zion. Wherever missionaries preached, the people were persuaded, and branches sprang up in towns and villages all over the country.

Quaint humour must have dictated some of the publicity these Apostles spread over the land. Ebenezer Hurlbutt, an extraordinarily successful agent, told his audiences that in Missouri the potatoes grew so large that only one end could be put into the fire at a time, and that corn was of such monstrous proportions the kernels had to be cracked with a sledge-hammer before grinding. Waxing eloquent, he described the grasses as so rich and abundant that cattle were fattened for the shambles in a week's time; the springs as gushing miraculous waters that sprang out of the ground whenever the Prophet commanded; and the streams as providing limitless water power for enterprising merchants. Chestnuts and pines were of a never-decaying variety; the climate was mild and salubrious, and the vegetation so richly tropical that all one had to do was to go to Missouri and live off the manna which God, through His Prophet Joseph, provided for His children! . . .

The Mormons were greatly aided in their promotional schemes, however, by the conditions of the period—the epoch from which they happened to spring. The great land hunger had seized upon the nation and had started the tide of westward migration which swept into the Mississippi Valley with a surging, elemental strength. Each spring the three main highways from the East saw an increasing flood of emigrants, patiently, hopefully, prayerfully working its way to the West. The broad bosom of the Ohio teemed with packets, barges, and an occasional steamboat, bearing the adventurous onward. By the thousands they came, individuals, families, whole villages, eager to escape the stony hillsides of New England, their debts to a smug, aristocratic governing class, and the slavery of the rapidly expanding eastern industrial system. In a period that saw an unequalled development of agriculture, commerce, manufacturing, transportation, and the rise of great public improvements—canals, turnpikes, steamboats, railroads—these *émigrés*, swept along on the tide of forces they but dimly understood, came West to grow rich and powerful with the young nation.

Every month saw the centre of the population of thirteen million shifting farther westward; New Englanders moved into the outskirts of New York; New Yorkers into Ohio; Ohioans into Indiana, Illinois, Missouri . . . in each of the winding, crawling streams that flowed on towards the Pacific were Mormons with Zion as their goal.

They were eager to talk, to tell their fellow-passengers of the great new religion, of the Holy Empire arising in Missouri. On the road, by the blazing camp-fires at night, at the river landings, they expounded, exhorted, persuaded. In their zeal their imaginations ran wild. Magnified by their naïve hope and faith, the Zion they approached became a place of great wonder. Many "just travelling," with no definite objective, joined them.

The City of Zion was alive with the continuous, excited activity. It became a buzzing confusion of feverish effort to put roofs over the heads of all its people. Every man turned builder; every woman, home-maker. Street was added to street, store to store, industry to industry, and the progress was jubilantly recorded week by week in the *Zion Star*. All eyes turned eagerly to the Temple site on the hill, where soon, they hoped, would rise the great walls of a gigantic enterprise, at once the glory of Mormon and the symbol of its mighty works.

Life in this newly-created frontier society was at first primitive and self-sustaining. The converts were forced to depend on their own ingenuity for most of the things they needed. The ploughing and hauling were often done with oxen. Wheat and corn were sown broadcast by hand and covered by hoes or crudely constructed drags. In the early spring it was a common sight to see the father of a family marking off the ground of his acres, the mother dropping the kernels, and the children, strung out in rows across the field, competing with each other in covering the seeds that provided them with food through the long, bitterly cold winter, during which they fought constantly against the ague, malarial fevers, and contagious diseases. Quinine, pennyroyal, and sheep tea were panaceas for all ills, but did little more than mitigate the terrible ravages that swept through the new community.

As the years rapidly succeeded each other, however, Zion became less and less an outpost of civilization. A lively system of barter developed between the flourishing city and St. Louis. The Mormons traded beef, hides, coon-skins, tallow, beeswax, and wild honey for such necessities as axes, hoes, cotton cards, hatchets, newer spinning-wheels, knives, ammunition and guns, bar shears for ploughs, and such comforts as only a manufacturing centre could supply.

The manually-minded brethren supervised construction, while the Prophet, Rigdon, and Tunk—God-appointed Trinity

—laboured strenuously in the money vineyards of the Lord. Theirs was the task, not only of speaking in tongues, of healing the sick by the laying on of hands, of prophesying, of casting out devils and evil spirits, but also of establishing Zion on a sound financial basis, of protecting the interests of the Lord's business, of making it exclusive and prosperous, regardless of the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that lay ahead.

And the obstacles were many. The law of Missouri was one of the most difficult to circumvent and taxed the Prophet's ingenuity to the limit. Silly legal requirements demanded protective measures for the bank's depositors. In vain did the Prophet proclaim the divine integrity of the ideals of Mormon; in vain did he plead for legal immunity for the Zion bank. The stupid Missourians were adamant. Finally, in wrathful indignation against the state banking authorities, the Prophet opened an institution which he quaintly termed the Anti-Banking Company in order that the Mormons might have a bank which was not a bank. This, in open defiance of the state, was done against Rigdon's protests and by virtue of a special Revelation.

The Mormons, in joyful gratitude, brought their wealth to the Anti-Banking Company. Sums from ten dollars to ten thousand, often representing the savings of a lifetime or the sacrifice of eastern estates, generations in building, found their way into the hands of the Prophet, whose deep, rich voice invariably blessed the faithful: "God will reward you, Brother Behr. The Lord will prosper you, Sister Emery. We are sowing the seed of a rich harvest, my beloved friends."

With the deposited money Joe did many things. First he bought acres and acres of land. The speculative fever clutched him. He thought of power in terms of acreage, never for a moment doubting his success as a promoter. Missouri soil was cheap, the terms of purchase easy. His lust for land communicated itself to his followers, who paid the Prophet two dollars per acre for land he had purchased for one. This was Joe's secret, but they had theirs too. Would they not resell the land to the later emigrants for a handsome profit? The Mormons thus warmed to their Prophet, whose magic extended even to business, and they hailed with enthusiasm the success of their Anti-Banking Company.

Joe bought other things with the dollars entrusted to him. He stocked the general store lavishly; he built another room, "the office," on to his house, and furnished it in the latest manner with articles from St. Louis. He bought Emma some fine dress lengths, but he had the bad judgment to give Felicity one exactly like the green-striped brocade he had presented to his wife, whereupon Emma made hers into two dresses for the Jorgenson

twins. The Prophet did not forget himself. While in St. Louis he ordered frock coats, silk hats, soft boots, and fine linen shirts.

Although still under thirty-five, Joe looked much older. His coarsely handsome, insolent face was flushed and jowlish; about his greenish eyes appeared a network of tiny wrinkles; the full lips were more loosely sensuous. The reddish mop of hair, of which he was so proud, was now kept trimmed, and trained to flare Byronically. Although his body retained its panther-like grace in movement, he was heavier. Physical sloth, rum, and indulgence were telling on him. But as he lost his youthful freshness, he acquired a certain fastidiousness about body and dress. Part of this he learned from the meticulous Sidney, Dr. Starr, and the business men he met in St. Louis, but his mirror also pointed the wisdom of taking care.

So with Grandma Dayton's pitifully small tithe and Aunt Martha's and those of the rest, Joe purchased fine raiment and, peacock fashion, strutted the muddy, timber-strewn streets of Zion. He exhorted his people to greater and greater efforts. Was he not a master among servants, a lord among princelings, a Prophet among men? Was this not the Power he dreamed of when, as a wide-eyed, fanciful lad, he lay beside the Palmyra creek shaping visions of himself as pirate on the high seas, as generalissimo of armies, as Moses leading the children of Israel into the Promised Land?

"Fast, men! No idling now. We must give our utmost for the Glory of Zion! Great things await us if we are diligent. Success lies just ahead!"

And the straining, sweating creatures, impressed by Solomon in all his glory, redoubled their efforts to finish yet another house before sundown.

But there was another, more human side, to the Prophet. He could be the hail fellow as well as the servant of the Lord. Particularly fond of sports, such as hunting, shooting, horseshoe pitching, quoits, vaulting, and wrestling, he would challenge the "boys" to a competition. He was often seen shouting and jumping like an untamed schoolboy as he outdid some opponent in throwing rocks or chunks of wood at a whisky jug fifty paces distant. There were few, if any, who could down him in a wrestling match. . . .

The Prophet's private life, however, grew increasingly difficult, and consumed more and more of his time. It is a delicate enough matter to maintain a harem openly, when one has law and custom on his side; but it is doubly precarious, requiring a talent approaching that of genius, for a Prophet to live polygamously and keep it a secret. Still Joe, never abashed by complexities of any sort, attempted it and was apparently succeeding.

Felicity still found favour in his sight, but his visits to her now were not so frequent as at first. After seven years at Zion she found herself with child and the Prophet felt a mixture of pride and relief in what he had almost given up for an impossible eventuality: he was proud of this further proof of his virility and relieved that he had justified his reasoning with Lem.

Lem had altered greatly. Since the night he had found Joe with Felicity, his natural quiet and docile contentment had deepened into an abysmal silence, dark and motionless. He disturbed Felicity, whom he would watch hour after hour with a pathetic dumbness, but Joe laughed at her fears and ignored the man whose fortune and wife he held. If he noticed him at all, he did so as one might an imbecile child. Lem was still Apostle Turner; he attended all the meetings, listened intently, but never spoke. Most of the other Apostles regarded him with pitying contempt, but some, hearing rumours, grew restive, and began quietly to question the infallibility of the Prophet.

Joe made this fact and Felicity's pregnancy (as she was about to bear the Prophet a son, she should take her mind off carnal things) an alibi for ceasing to visit her.

Felicity was not deceived. She knew that Laura Denholm, pretty daughter of the new brother from Ohio, was being initiated into the secret mysteries of Zomas. She knew, too, that Joe made numerous other excursions into the ranks of the neophytes. She was lonely and hurt, but the heavenly bride of a Prophet must not complain.

Sophronia Doolittle injected the one flaw in Joe's plan for his heaven of fair women. She had tired of gathering in the stray sheep in Ohio and had come to Zion, travelling as the pioneer American Sheba.

To Joe's surprised annoyance at her arrival, she gushed: "The Lord revealed Himself to me in a dream, saying, 'Go to the source of things. Hasten to My church in Missouri and to the Prophet.' Those were the exact words, Prophet Joseph, and here I am!"

Joe was nonplussed. Caution was easy because the desiccated woman repelled him. Yet here she was with her two wagon-loads of furniture and a lot of money.

"You did right, Sister Sophronia. We need help in the school. You will make a fine teacher. Now you must meet my wife, Sister Emma. She will make you at home in Zion. You see, I'm extremely busy. God's work, you know . . . many demands."

His full, musical voice ran on and on, and Sophronia, "thrilled to be at last under the Prophet's wing," proceeded to build a fine house and to serve the cause of Mormon by poking her way into every corner and activity of the town. Joe had decided

to avoid her, but he found that impossible. She had become a thorn in his side. . . .

During one of his numerous trips to St. Louis the Prophet visited a medicine show. The owner had two Egyptian mummies which he used to attract his audience. These, he solemnly declared, were an Egyptian king and his youngest and thirty-second wife. Drawing his gaping audience closely about him, he translated the hieroglyphics on the outside of the mummy case: "King Hadurabi, the mighty, commands that Shehabra the beautiful, his last and thirty-second wife, be buried by his left side; Cleonta, his first wife, at his right side; the other wives to be ranged in order at his feet, according to the number of children they have borne him. For lo! the King desires to be mighty in heaven even as on earth!"

Joe, listening, was at first amused, but suddenly an idea came to him. In a flash, in that last sentence, he had his Revelation. But he must have the mummies with him in Zion. The medicine man was obstinate; he seemed to set great store by them. But Joe brooked no check and finally secured them for a staggering sum and bore them back to his kingdom. They were placed in the temporary log church, where the awe-stricken Mormons visited them. The Prophet reported that the Angel of the Golden Plates had led him to a hill near St. Louis, that the earth had rumbled and opened as lightning flashed across the sky, and that the two mummies had come forth. Further than that he did not explain publicly—yet. The matter needed careful planning. But to the inner circle, the very faithful—in short, to those who could be trusted—he hinted at a Revelation commanding plural marriages.

Hezekiah was among the first to be apprised of this new Revelation. The Prophet declared him freed from that "irreligious, impious woman, Patience Tunk, who has been your wife for twenty years without giving you an heir," and on this same day said the Mormon marriage service over his first Apostle and the plump Widow Perkins from Pennsylvania, who had been converted from the cold, gloomy error of Calvinism by Hezekiah's ardent solicitation of her soul's salvation.

Thus the Prophet, the law-maker, paid a debt to Hezekiah, and planted the seed of a new idea in the minds of his docile sheep.

If Emma knew all of Joe's peccadilloes, she did not reveal her knowledge to her husband or to others. With the birth of her little girl, followed two years later by a son, she knew for a certainty what was to be her destiny. What she had hoped had come to pass. When her arms held her children, the pain by the way was forgotten. She gave herself over to motherhood with the thoroughness, the sincerity, her nature craved.

Sister Emma was not unhappy. She had determined upon her course back in Palmyra. Children—money—power of her own; these she would take. From all that would shock or pain her in Joe and his business she would turn away. She no longer feared him, but he still had power to sway her physically. Since the addition had been made to the house, Joe had a bed in his office. Emma had the babies and the orphan Judy with her. This suited them both better.

But Emma's quiet, deep beauty had a strength that Joe could not resist, and, however much she withdrew from him during the day, his embrace in the sheltering dark worked some old alchemy in her soul, and she gave herself to him freely and passionately. She did not allow those brief interludes to drift over into the other part of her life. She built up, unconsciously, an image of the lover who came to her infrequently. He was not the flushed, arrogant man who sat opposite her at supper—he was someone quite different. This coarsened fellow, devouring too much food, talking incessantly, strutting pompously in his own household, had nothing to do with the swift, sweeping flame that consumed her fiercely, silently. No, Joe the Prophet and Joe the Lover were two quite different persons, and Emma took care that they did not meet.

Chapter Twenty-eight

AMONG THE CONVERTS WHO SOUGHT THE BLESSINGS OF ZION, there were some intelligent, clear-eyed ones who were not long deluded by the Prophet and his Religion. Of these a few took alarm at the curiously impious monstrosity which paraded itself brazenly as a Church, and withdrew in great haste. Clutching their precious dollars and carefully counting their cattle, they hurried away, eager to put miles between themselves and Zion.

Others, wishing mightily to believe, were loath to doubt the perfection of the miracle-working religion for which they had forsaken old gods, old homes, old friends. These stayed on, closing eyes and ears to any evidence of error in their Prophet. Some of this number, having surrendered their little fortunes to the Anti-Banking Company, felt powerless to move. Then, too, the honest doubters were such a small minority that they dared not even whisper their fears to the shouting Mormons surrounding them.

There began to grow up, however, a sort of secret questioning among these sober, honest, sincere converts. Already there were rumours that the Prophet was scheming to gain possession of the money and property of his followers for himself. As time went on, they who had come to seek a new religion more reasonable than the one they had given up were forced to ask themselves what manner of faith they served.

There emerged from this number of devout, kindly people, a leader, one who dared face the possibility of arousing the wrath of the Prophet. Alex Behr, Rigdon's old friend, became the spokesman for the intelligent minority who had not expected to surrender Christianity when they embraced Mormonism.

Behr was a short, stocky man with clear, cold blue eyes, and a fearless, dogged honesty, innocent of compromise. Years before, under Rigdon's magnetic preaching in the Campbellite Church in Ohio, Behr had become a most faithful, deeply devout disciple. Sidney epitomized for this steady German farmer the final truth, the infallible interpreter of God's word. When Rigdon on the way to Zion had come again to Kirtland, heralding the latest Revelation of the Golden Plates, Behr had followed him in blind but happy faith. True, he had never liked the Prophet, but to doubt Brother Rigdon's estimate of him was unthinkable.

So Behr had come out to Zion, bringing with him all his family: Frieda and her young husband, mamma and grandma Behr, and various other dependents attached to his solid little world. He had sold his fine farm at a profit and entrusted the money to the Anti-Banking Company. As Joe's unchristian

conduct grew steadily more flagrant, Behr had gone to Rigdon, who found it increasingly difficult to quiet his friend's mounting fears. Alex went about with a troubled, accusing air that caused Sidney to evade his old friend.

Apostle Doolittle, ex-school teacher, shocked by the Prophet's shiftless, dissipating habits and obscene profanity on occasions, had aligned himself with the Behr faction. These two apostles became the focal point of the first organized dissension in Zion. At first hesitantly, slowly, secretly, the dissatisfied came to these two, admitting in whispered, veiled words their timid fears that "all was not right." As Joe's conduct became increasingly more arrogant and recklessly dangerous, the minority dissension grew bolder and larger. They began to meet at Behr's house to discuss what should be done. While defending their new faith, they admitted their doubts about the perfection of the Prophet and the honesty of certain of the Apostles.

Although Rigdon would never attend these meetings, he knew of all that took place. At first he was fearful lest an open rupture blast the entire enterprise; later he secretly encouraged the dissenters. In his desperation he began to hope that the opposition might grow strong enough to solve the increasingly hazardous problem of Joe's unreliability. The dissenters trusted Rigdon; they understood the value of his intimate knowledge of the Prophet and they carefully guarded his confidences. Thus, by degrees, Rigdon came to lead a double life. While publicly defending the Prophet in all his wild and autocratic policies against the anger and antagonism of the unconverted settlers, who feared the ruthless aggression of the Mormons, he secretly fanned the sparks of rising indignation which threatened to burst into flames at each fresh outrage committed by the High and Mighty Joe.

The first explosion was set off by the murder of Jarius Lamb, an apostate Mormon living in Liberty, whose body was found hideously mutilated on the roadside, half-way between Zion and Liberty. Lamb, a bachelor and religious fanatic, had come out with a New England train only six months before. The Prophet's drunkenness and shifty money dealings had immediately aroused his violent protest. He had left the Mormons, openly indignant, and had gone to live in Liberty, where he talked incessantly against the "autocratic and deceitful Prophet." The Apostles, made uneasy by the man's bitter and garrulous apostasy, tried to persuade him to return to New England, but Lamb, a master cabinet-maker, set up shop in Liberty, and, while making beautiful walnut chests, inveighed against the "infamy of that impious drunkard who desecrates the word of God."

The horror of Jarius' brutal murder shocked both Mormons

and settlers. The mutterings of discontent grew into an angry rumbling. Although the murderers were not detected, a shadow of guilt hung over Zion.

On Sunday, Joe, from his pulpit, cried out: "This terrible calamity defies our understanding. It is impossible to comprehend, to believe that such punishment can be meted out to a poor, deluded wretch. But God is a just and awful God, righteous in anger! We have seen the terrible swiftness of His punishment! Let us beware!"

The listeners crept silently from the church and hurried home, chilled in spite of the June sunshine.

Rigdon was not by the Prophet's right hand that Sunday morning. He had taken to bed immediately when knowledge of the murder reached him. All through Saturday and Sunday he had lain sick and weak with shame and a new terror. The old woman who kept his house refused admittance to all save Dr. Starr, for whom Rigdon sent late on Saturday night.

"I'm afraid it's cholera, Doctor. I seem to have all the symptoms. I'm burning up and still I'm cold."

He shuddered as he spoke and lowered the lids over his restless, haunted eyes, which gleamed wildly and a bit hysterically.

Dr. Starr studied with keen, penetrating glance the long, thin, wild-eyed man who had tossed the coverlets into frenzied disorder. He was silent while his deft hand made a quick examination.

"It isn't cholera," he said grimly.

"But I have a fever! I'm burning up, I tell you! I'm a sick man," Rigdon pleaded in a strained voice, as if imploring the doctor's corroboration of his fears.

"You're sick, all right," the young doctor retorted with a lack of sympathy Rigdon tried to ignore.

It took all of his courage to return the doctor's gaze as he asked, "If it isn't cholera, what is it?"

Starr hesitated for a moment. Then, "Rigdon, why in God's name do you lend yourself to this outrage?"

Although spoken quietly, the words exploded in Rigdon's brain. His startled, haunted eyes gazed unsteadily into Starr's accusing face. Rigdon could not believe he had heard aright. Although there hovered always between the two men, in their strange friendship, the sense of things unsaid, the younger man had never dared to speak to him intimately before.

Rigdon, in a thin, broken voice, started to speak: "If you think I had anything to do with . . ." He flinched, then continued hysterically, "If you imagine I knew, or had any intimation that they would . . . Good God!" He broke off, falling back upon the bed with a shudder.

"I don't think that, Rigdon. You would never stoop to such

Rigdon stared at him out of narrowed, terrified eyes. For a moment he seemed about to speak, but the impulse was quickly checked. Starr waited, hoping Rigdon would unburden his heart, but the Apostle closed his eyes and turned his head to the wall. He would not confess, but neither could he defend himself to this clear-eyed, reproachful young friend, who saw quite plainly the depths of his sick, fretful soul.

Dr. Starr rose, took his hat and satchel, and started to leave. He looked again with a compassionate sternness upon the drawn, lean face of the ascetic Sidney. His voice was gentle when he spoke.

"You don't need herbs, Rigdon. You need a confessor. Sorry I can't help you. Good-bye. . . ."

Rigdon did not reply, but lay tense, trying hard to shut out the words and the visions evoked by them in the doctor's warning. It was the first time in all these years that he had heard in words the deep, deep fear which a still, small voice sometimes whispered. "You've got a lot to answer for, Sidney Rigdon!" The words shouted themselves at him. Try as he would, he could not stop listening.

Outside the house, Dr. Starr met Alex Behr, troubled and anxious, coming to see Brother Sidney. Knowing of Behr's long devotion to the sick man, he asked:

"Was Rigdon's wife living with him in Kirtland when you knew him there?"

"Yes, and a fine, Christian woman she was, although delicate. He loved her and his two children. He was a good husband and father. A splendid example he was."

"So there are children? I didn't know that. I've never heard him speak of them."

"That's just the trouble, you see. When I ask him about Sister Rigdon and Nancy and David, he answers curt-like. It's as if they didn't mean anything to him now. He's been so long away from them I think he's forgotten to be human." Alex sighed. "No, he isn't the same man."

"Why aren't they out here? I mean his family?"

"Pioneering's too hard for an invalid, I guess. And I don't think Sister Rigdon approves of the religion."

After a pause Dr. Starr spoke significantly: "As a friend, wouldn't it be wise to encourage him to return to his family, Brother Behr?"

Alex pondered this and at parting said slowly, "You are right, Dr. Starr. I sometimes wonder whether Brother Sidney didn't make a mistake in leaving the Campbellites after all."

Some days later the dissenters agreed upon a daring plan. At the Sunday service, when the Prophet called for voluntary testimony, Apostle Behr would rise and in no uncertain terms denounce those practices of Joe's which seemed sinful and dangerous. He was to be followed by Apostle Doolittle, then by a dozen others, who, speaking in quick succession, would each prefer charges of misconduct.

"We don't want to attack the religion," Behr earnestly insisted when instructing his band. "We all are faithful Mormons. We all believe in the Revelations of the Golden Plates. But our Prophet has fallen into evil ways. He has extorted money from us and used it in unsafe investments until we are practically penniless, and he has countenanced immoralities degrading to our decency and our religion. Our neighbours no longer trust us, and are threatening to rise against us. We fear for the safety of our homes and our religion. We must try to save the Prophet. Long have we laboured in secret. Now we must come forth into the light and fight bravely, openly, for the right as we see it."

"Does Brother Sidney approve this plan?" a timid voice inquired.

Behr's passionately earnest face clouded. "Apostle Sidney is ill. He has denied us admittance. Though I cannot speak at his command, I feel safe in saying that we can rely on his help in this matter. I fear that worry over these troubles has brought Brother Sidney to bed. Let us all pray for his speedy recovery."

The following Sunday morning an air of tense, nervous expectancy pervaded the meeting-house. In spite of the sedulously imposed secrecy of the dissenting meetings, rumour of the "rebellious doings" had spread. The long, barn-like room was packed. The Apostles, all present, ranged themselves on the raised platform. Rigdon, looking weak and ill, took his customary place at the right of the Prophet's chair, which was still vacant, and began nervously, automatically, to read the inevitable papers. The Prophet's tardiness increased his nervousness. It boded ill.

After what seemed an interminable delay to the restive Mormons, Joe strode on to the platform with an insolent, defiant air that sent a chill over Rigdon. There was something sinister about the mocking, cruel smile with which he surveyed his high priests and audience. The dissenters stirred uneasily, but Alex Behr looked steadily at Rigdon, whose white face and emaciated body roused a pitying determination in the breast of the humble farmer.

Joe, with a grandiloquent gesture, motioned Rigdon to proceed. Songs, prayers, ceremony—then the Prophet rose. Strongly fortified by anger and rum, he launched into a circuitous attack upon the “enemies within our gates,” leaving little doubt in the minds of any regarding his knowledge of the plot. He flung insult after insult against Rigdon, who gazed at the strutting, raging man out of dark, malevolent eyes, but who seemed powerless to move or speak.

“History repeats itself, Sacred History! Another great Prophet was betrayed! He had His Judas and I have mine!” Turning to Rigdon, he flung his arms wide, raised his head, and cried with diabolical irony, “Brother Sidney, I await the Judas kiss!”

A gasp of shocked horror swept over the audience. There was a tense moment of suspended, painful silence. Then Alex Behr leaped to his feet; his pale eyes flashed in flaming anger; his sturdy body trembled as he cried aloud in quivering rage:

“That’s a lie, a damned lie! God ought to strike you dead for your hypocrisy!”

In an instant there was pandemonium. Hezekiah grabbed Alex and tried to drag him from the platform. William Smith drew a bowie knife and advanced on the struggling pair. Alex’s confederate, Apostle Doolittle, swung his heavy arms into the fray, and the battle was on. Men in the audience dashed towards the platform; women screamed and rushed from the house; knives flashed, but were quickly wrested from careless hands by others which threw them under the benches. Men struggled, swore, prayed, cursed!

Joe, with an affected surprise and contempt, watched the excited, blundering men surge around him. Slowly a look of canny fear came over his flushed, excited face. He fled the scene. As he hurried across the common to his own home, the sounds of battle followed him.

Rigdon, sick and deathly pale, leaned against an overturned table. On his face was the incredulous, pained expression with which he had watched the same men cavort in their spiritual orgy on Dedication Sunday. Suddenly he could stand it no longer. He leaped on to a chair and cried out in stern, outraged command:

“Stop! Stop, I tell you! In the name of God——”

They obeyed. As quickly as it had begun, the battle ended. The men fell away from each other. Shamed, shaken with horror at what they had done, they took their seats. Then Rigdon prayed:

“Oh, God, forgive us our trespasses, even as we forgive those who trespass against us. Amen.”

All strength left him. Exhausted, with head throbbing,

Rigdon went silently from the house of worship. None dared approach him. In that brief, agonized prayer they had seen a soul in hell. They did not understand, but their simple, rough minds were strangely, deeply moved. Silent and ashamed, they followed.

Chapter Twenty-nine

AMONG THE MORMONS OF UNDEVIATING FAITH NONE WAS MORE sincere than Lem Turner. His was not an inquiring mind: it was rather an accepting one. In his simple, drab life there had been but two emotional experiences—religion and Felicity. He had been a devout and consistent Methodist since the day of his conversion at a camp meeting when a lad of twelve, and Methodism had been his only passion until he met the woman who became his wife.

Lem had not made his wealth. He was not the aggressive kind that hews a fortune out of virgin earth. Nevertheless, falling heir to the broad, rich Ohio acres homesteaded by two aggressive, bachelor uncles who had been carried off by the fever one bitter winter, Lem found himself in unexpected possession of one of the most productive sections in Ohio. He had been a good farmer. For years his land and his faith occupied him to the exclusion of all other interests.

Then, Felicity Narbor and her maiden aunt had come to visit the latter's sister in Mantua. The Sunday Lem had seen the tall, dark, beautiful woman in the plaid silk pelisse sitting in Jeb William's pew he had felt the first stirrings of tumult in his emotional life. But he was so shy that he had scarcely dared lift his eyes to look into the oval, olive face with its deep, dark eyes and its restless red, red mouth. . . .

Lem had fallen a willing, wondering victim to the concerted efforts of the impoverished William clan. He and Felicity were married in less than three months after their first meeting. He accepted his wife with the utter and final simplicity of an awed child. She became a part of his religion. He understood neither of his loves—the church or Felicity—but both were ultimate truths to which his timidly affectionate nature clung in humble gratitude after the years of lonely isolation with his stolid, almost speechless German uncles.

Lem was inarticulate, shy, and a Methodist—so he did not try to voice or explain his emotions, not even to himself. Occasions requiring extended conversation were left to Felicity, of whose book learning and fluent speech Lem was inordinately proud. The very dumbness of his love deepened and strengthened its roots. He did not himself know how saturated, how coloured, how dependent his life with Felicity had become. . . .

In the secretary one of his uncles had brought out from Philadelphia in 1800, there was a huge book of religious engravings. In it was a reproduction of the Titian "Gypsy Madonna." As a child, Lem had been fascinated by it without understanding the cause of his fascination. One night when

Felicity draped her glistening black hair halo-wise about her head, Lem gave a startled cry of delight and brought her the big book to show her the picture.

"You are the Madonna, Felicity . . . only more beautiful," he added with timid candour.

The woman had been pleased, but, flushing, had said, "That sounds like the Catholics, Lem. They worship the Madonna and we know that is wicked. You must not say that again." . . .

Felicity had struggled to be a good wife to Lem, but there had been grave difficulties at the very beginning. She was not ungrateful. She had hoped, prayed, that they, being one flesh, might give some peace and satisfaction to each other. She had eagerly sought for relief from the devouring restlessness that followed her days and haunted her nights. She had fought against the instinctive recoil of her flesh at his first awkward, unpractised touch; when Lem, in puzzled confusion, had silently left her, gone to sleep in another room, she had first felt relief and a redoubled gratitude. But as the days passed the dumb agony of hurt in his open, childish face had been too much. Besides, her own nights were lonely, filled with a sort of terror at the years ahead. She had dissembled. From out of woman's instinct, created during ages through which women have pretended, she found the way to give herself entirely, while giving nothing. It was easy to deceive Lem, whose gratitude and whose home were her only compensation for the eight years of sterile, feverishly unhappy years in the pioneering Ohio to which she had been transplanted—sold.

Felicity loathed the crude, raw North-west Territory. She missed the peaceful, aged dignity of her Connecticut village, with its large, beneficent elms, gracious white houses, and tight little folk ways. The years as Lem Turner's wife had simply banked the fires of her smouldering discontent.

When the Prophet loomed into her life, overnight all was changed—completely changed. It was as if the repressed miseries of the years were consumed in the conflagration he set raging. Her initial New England hesitations and fears were obliterated, swept away by the insistent, stormy urge of a highly emotional woman of thirty-five. Grasping the crutch of a pretended religious consecration, Felicity gave herself to her passion for Joe Smith with the fierce abandon of her intense nature.

She was not a cruel woman, however. She protected Lem from knowledge of her adultery. Through the months she lived with the Prophet, it was she who took every precaution against the discovery of her dual life—as much to save Lem from shock as for fear of what he might do.

What Lem did do when he discovered the Prophet's re-

quisitioning of his wife's favour surprised and disturbed Felicity. She had expected reproaches, perhaps febrile anger, even revolt against his devoutly worshipped religion. She had meditated on what she would do if Lem demanded that they renounce Mormonism, rescue all possible, and flee Zion.

But he did none of these things. He spoke no word of reproach. Daily he grew more silent. She tried to talk with him about the "broad religious significance" of her relationship to the Prophet, but a look of tragic fright and horror came into his languid, blue eyes. He left the house abruptly, as if running away from a trap. He did not berate the Prophet. He sedulously continued his duties as Apostle, hung upon Joe's words, followed each Revelation with poignant intensity. But he had grown afraid of Joe. Even in meeting he always kept a certain distance between them. If Joe suddenly addressed him directly, he would start, turn pale, and answer with muttering incoherency. At such public exhibitions of poor Lem's confusion, Joe shrugged his shoulders as if to say "Poor creature. He isn't worth much, but we must be patient." Others looked upon Lem as "queer," as "not quite right," and treated him with pity or contempt.

Lem lived apart from Felicity as much as possible. He had not approached her, had not entered her bedroom, since the tragic night that Joe had acknowledged himself the annunciatory Angel. The morning after that harrowing incident Felicity had come in from market to find Lem dragging his bureau out of the bedroom into the living-room. Ignoring her gesture of question, he finished carrying all of his personal effects from the room. Each night thereafter he slept upon his improvised bed in the big room. He always left early in the evening to go wandering alone about the roads and fields. People who met him saw him scuttle guiltily away, without speaking. He waited until he was sure his wife was in bed. Then he crept quietly into the house, barred the door, and in the darkened room stealthily made ready for sleep.

Once, out of pity for the lonely, haunted man, Felicity had left her room when she knew he was in bed, and had come in and stood beside him. When she touched his hand, he had started back with a hurt cry and exclaimed in a frightened whimper :

"No—no! That would be a horrible sin. One must not touch the Madonna!"

Not fully understanding, but sorely troubled, Felicity went away. Even in the darkness she felt his sorrowful, pathetic eyes with their look of childish desperation fixed upon her.

In all Zion only two people—Emma and Dr. Starr—had any glimmer of what went on in the dim mind of the silent, shrinking

little man, who seemed always tiptoeing about, frightened and listening—listening intently. Emma sensed somewhat vaguely Lem's inner unhappiness. But since she had closed her eyes and turned away from the situation engendering it, there was little she could do. She was always kind, even tenderly sympathetic to him. She had him help her with her flowers and her garden. Over rose bushes and trailing arbutus Lem forgot himself sometimes and would speak with Sister Emma quite naturally about soils and cuttings and roots and seeds. Both were careful to avoid any reference to Joe or Felicity.

But Dr. Starr watched with growing concern Lem's unnatural, secretive isolation of himself. The doctor had attended Felicity through an attack of cholera during her second spring in Zion, and had maintained the friendship he formed with all of his Mormon patients. His penetrating eyes quickly took in the curiously unhealthy situation. Instead of despising Lem for a cuckold, he pitied him and wished to straighten out the tangles in his harried brain. He saw in Lem's vacant, fixed look, in his timorous, hurried retreat, in his agonized start when addressed, dangerous symptoms.

Dr. Starr had grown wise in the ways of religious fanaticism during his enigmatic sojourn among the Mormons. Although his scientific detachment protected him somewhat from emotional waste over the wild vagaries of most, he viewed with serious, despairing concern the mental processes of a few, and Lem Turner baffled and troubled him greatly because he could not touch him. Lem evaded his deftest, most adroit approach. The canny shrewdness of these escapes alarmed Dr. Starr more than any other symptom. He had been on the verge of expressing his fears to Felicity several times, but, since it involved matters delicate to approach, he procrastinated. Dr. Starr found life hazardous enough in Zion: one cannot care for the health of bodies without being interested in the spirits that animate them. He longed to heal Felicity's fevered mind, to clarify Lem's jumbled thoughts, but there was need to tread carefully in Zion—so Dr. Starr did nothing about the Turners.

While Emma pitied, while Felicity grew increasingly restive under her husband's portentously silent gaze, and while the doctor felt a grave concern, Joe, the Prophet, continued his ruthless exploitation of Lem's blind faith, oblivious of any significance in the man's strangely unnatural movements.

It was he who had told Lem of Felicity's pregnancy, giving him a tremendous 'slap on the back as he shouted, "Congratulations, Apostle Turner. It is my pleasure to tell you that my prophecy has come true—that you are at last to become a father." Lem's rounded blue eyes and quivering mouth goaded Joe to add, "I was glad to be of service to you in this little matter,

Brother Lem. I wish all of the Lord's commands were as pleasant to obey. You haven't thanked me yet for giving you a Prophet's child to foster." With piercing cruelty, he grasped the shoulder of the shrinking man: "Speak up, Lem Turner! Give thanks for the Lord's blessings!"

Lem's trembling lips moved, but made no sound. He drew away from Joe, turned, and started down the road. Joe looked after him with amused contempt, then shouted, "Hey, there! Wait a minute!"

The little man paused until Joe joined him. He stood quivering like a terrified animal, listening to the Prophet's low-voiced instructions:

"There's a meeting of them hard-shelled Baptists on at Stillwater this evening. You sneak in and listen to all they've got to say. I hear they've been agitating against us, giving public testimony to our disadvantage. You listen sharp and bring me word. Got to protect our Religion, Lem! Understand?"

Lem's trembling had lessened. His eyes settled to an intelligent calm. His answer was prompt: "Yes, I understand; I'll be there."

In spite of Lem's aversion for public appearance, Joe had found him obedient, trustworthy, and efficient in executing the commands of the Church. He made use of him as his chief spy on the Anti-Mormons both within and without the organization of the Church.

And spying was no mean pastime these days, for the Mormons were surrounded by a rapidly mounting wall of opposition. The original interest, curiosity, even sympathy with which the settlers had received the first zealots had given way to suspicion and jealousy when they discovered that the Prophet was not a "desirable" neighbour. Suspicion and jealousy had grown into indignation, anger, alarmed fear—fear for the safety of their lands and homes, for they had not overlooked the Prophet's Revelation to the effect that all the land in Missouri belonged, by Divine right, to Zion, and that all the enemies of the religion should be driven out, by force if necessary. In the autumn of 1838 the antagonism against the Prophet and his city was gathering momentum. Jew, Gentile, churchman, and atheist—all united in the common cause to protect themselves against Joe's greedy ambitions and, if necessary, to drive him out of the state. Joe found it more and more difficult to get detailed information regarding the secret meetings and stealthy propaganda of these enemies, or "persecutors" as he called them. He had found Lem curiously useful in this field, for his timid, inoffensive manner masked him completely. Inconspicuous, silent people regarded him as a harmless half-wit and placed no check on his entry. So unshatterable was Lem's faith in the divine origin of

Zion that even logically damning attacks made upon it but served to intensify that faith. Lem's was the blind, curious devotion of the fanatical martyr, and this Joe knew.

When the little man brought him word that Preacher Roley (who had apostasized and gone back to his pulpit in Liberty) was denouncing Joe as "a sinful, blustering counterfeit, an impious scoundrel who has broken every commandment, and a sinner upon whom the wrath of God will surely fall," the Prophet, flushing angrily, cried:

"We'll get that dirty skunk! He'll pay for defaming God's chosen! We'll show 'em that we can fight! Let 'em feel the teeth of the Sons of Dan!"

Lem had zealously carried out further orders in the name of the Lord, and Preacher Roley had awakened one morning to find his cattle gone, his barn in flames, and the letters "SD" beneath a skull and cross-bones marked on his door. This atrocity initiated the work of the Sons of Dan, or Danites, as they were known—a secret organization formed by the Prophet to protect him and to "give to the buzzards" all enemies of the Church. The name was drawn from Genesis xlix. 17: "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." Under cover of night, in sinister secrecy, this chosen band spread terror among all those opposed to the Prophet's schemes.

The Prophet committed a fatal error, however, when he commissioned Lem as one of the Sons of Dan to do away with Jarius Lamb. From the night of that horror Lem never emerged into light. He evaded everyone; after wandering through the bronze and gold glory of the autumn countryside and coming in late at night, too tired and nervous to sleep, he would mutter incoherently to himself as he turned restlessly on his narrow, hard bed in the great room. His haunted eyes grew tragic with the misery of horrific visions; his broken, stooped body quivered, as if ever ready to spring away in flight. . . .

Felicity, now great with the child she expected soon, urged him to eat. She coaxed, as one persuades a sick animal, but he would not listen; his eyes refused to meet hers; he avoided the slightest touch of her hand.

"Come, Lem, eat something—for my sake. You'll be ill—and that will be very hard on me—now."

At this allusion he looked at her with incredible horror and wonder. But when he saw the tears in her eyes, his face broke into pitiful contortions and he rushed out of the house as if pursued. . . .

Felicity sat weeping the slow, scalding tears of lonely discouragement. Joe had not been near her for months. She was intensely conscious of reproach in the attitude of many of the

villagers. Even Dr. Starr seemed to avoid her these days. Sister Emma was the only one who treated her kindly. A nameless fear about Lem possessed her, but there was no one with whom she could share it. She wanted to talk to Dr. Starr, but how could she without telling things which must not be uttered? One could not dissemble with that quiet, knowing man—one felt that those eyes penetrated too deeply anyway.

In vain did the Prophet pontifically summon Lem to his office. He was never to be found. Joe finally grew angry with him, sent him threatening messages signed by the Sons of Dan, but still Lem did not come. He had last appeared in church the Sunday following the murder of Jarius Lamb. When the fight had broken out, he had escaped. But his failure to fight on the side of the Prophet had been noted by Apostle Behr, who had sought for him through the following week. Finally Behr waited one night near the Turner home. About eleven he saw Lem enter and a few minutes later he faced the weary, mud-stained man:

"Brother Turner, I want you to see this paper. You know the Prophet's handwriting, don't you?"

Lem nodded. None could mistake that childish, careless scrawl.

"Please read this, then. It is surely to your interest to do so."

Dazed, uncomprehending, Lem sat at the table while Behr moved a candle near and placed before him a much-folded page from the notebook affected by the Prophet. There was silence in the chill, dim room. The curtain over the bedroom door stirred slightly, but neither man noticed. The logs in the fireplace glowed fitfully, making grotesque shadows in the dark corners of the cabin. On the centre table, near Lem's nervous, blackened hands, was a sewing-basket filled with the tiny garments Felicity seemed for ever sewing. Behr noted the bed, neatly made and drawn near the fire. The room was orderly, comfortable, but Behr felt a distinct chill upon him. Perhaps it was because he distrusted that dark lioness who was mistress here. His eyes returned to Lem, whose face, shocked and unbelieving, was questioningly raised to his.

"Where did you get this?"

"We took it—stole it, you might say," he answered grimly.

"But it can't be—it can't be genuine," Lem whispered in horrified tones as he looked again and again at the paper, as if it were a serpent ready to spring at him.

"Lem, you know that's genuine. That page concerns you. We've got more, equally damning, about others. We have letters addressed to the East which we got and may have to use . . ." At the stark tragedy in Lem's face, Behr continued: "I feel sorry for you, Lem. I went through all this a year ago. I struggled not

to believe because I was a true convert as you were. But my eyes are open, and it's my duty as a Christian to open the eyes of others—although it's dangerous business," he added darkly.

Lem stared past Alex, his eyes glassy and fixed. At last he spoke, not to Alex, but to an unseen presence before him: "If this is true—then the whole thing is false! May I have this?" He indicated the paper. "I'll use it . . . expiation, you know."

He rose and came close to Behr, speaking in a low, excited, crazy tone: "Expiation of sins . . . terrible sins, Brother Behr . . . sins you can't imagine . . ." His close-set eyes had a strange, fierce light like blue fire in them. With quick, jerky movements he ushered Behr from the room. "You came just in time, Brother Behr. The Lord sent you. God bless you for coming—in time—for expiation. . . . Yes, there is time enough yet for that. . . . We must cleanse ourselves . . . expiate . . ."

Behr, in confused surprise at the wild, incomprehensible words, made his way down the hill in the November darkness that clung damply about the sleeping Zion.

Lem waited until Behr's footsteps died away, then crept stealthily from the house and hurried up the hill to the Prophet's cabin. Although it was nearing midnight, a light shone through the square window in the new wing, the Prophet's office, and towards that light Lem steered his feverish course, the folded paper burning the hand that clutched it tightly, excitedly. . . .

Although his whirling mind had formed no plan, he meant to walk right in, find the Prophet, waken him if necessary, to demand—no, to see—no— He got no further. But he must see the Prophet, must look upon him again—must ascertain for himself if this blinding, blazing terror were true.

Ready to knock, he halted. Voices sharp and violent within! Grown wily through months of spying, Lem gently tried the latch. The unbarred door opened an inch under his cautious touch. At the desk in the far end of the room were the Prophet and Apostle Sidney. A mass of papers was spread between them. Two empty whisky bottles were at Joe's elbow. Rigdon, looking pale and ill, was speaking:

"I've warned you! The game's about up. People are on to you. Between your women and the bottle you've destroyed what sense you once had. Now that your thefts have brought down state interference, I see the end. You can't treat people like dogs and not expect them to rise against you!"

"Damned swine! We'll raise our own army and fight them!" Joe snarled, although his flushed face looked worried.

"You can't. You've lost your own people."

"Yes, thanks to your help," Joe sneered.

"In spite of my help. You're a hopeless fool, Joe Smith. Not content with arousing the enmity of every town in this

kindly, simple chap he was. Look at him now—a crazy imbecile! You use his wife for your lust, then make him murder for you!" Rigdon's voice had risen to tremulous pitch.

Joe, pitched forward across the table, blustered: "Look here, Sid, you go too far—I'll have you know . . ."

Lem quietly closed the door.

When he entered his own home a few minutes later, Felicity sat at the table, trembling with dread and apprehension. From across the shadowy room, his wide, wild eyes glared at her with such intensity that she cried out in fear:

"What is it, Lem? What was on that paper?"

"It was our delivery into the hands of the Lord!"

Continuing to look at her with maniacal penetration, he went on feverishly: "We have been in bondage—we have lived in sin—God has tried us sore—but He sent the paper in time—we shall be led out of our sin—washed in the blood of the Lamb—a living sacrifice—if ye repent—though your sins be as scarlet—yes, we shall go to the Lord—to the seat of judgment—cleansed of our sins—washed in the blood of the Lamb—no, not Jarius' blood—our own blood—shed in deepest repentance . . ."

He had advanced slowly to the centre of the room. Leaning towards the woman paralyzed with fear, he whispered, "And our deliverance came just in time!"

"In time? What do you mean?" Her voice was scarcely audible.

"Before the baby is born—before the unforgivable sin! Bastard . . . Ugh!"

He picked up the basket of baby clothes and, carrying the tiny, soft garments to the fire, threw them upon the logs, one by one, muttering, "Bastard! Son of a Prophet! It must not be born . . ."

He turned to Felicity, who, stiff with terror, had risen and started for the door. Pushing her roughly back into the chair, he continued in sibilant tones, his contorted face close to hers: "It would not be a baby. It would be a serpent or a pig . . . or it might be the bloody head of Jarius . . . cut into pieces!"

Lem's twitching hands lay on her shoulders like burning strips of iron. She was powerless to move or speak. He talked ceaselessly, feverishly, always in whispers, as though they were surrounded by listening spirits. "Here, wrap your hair around

your head, like the Madonna, Felicity. You remember—the way you wore it that night. See . . . how beautiful you were—like the Madonna!"

He took from his pocket the grimy, wrinkled picture of the "Gypsy Madonna," which he had shown to her years ago. "You looked like her once—but that was before the great sin. Here . . ."

He grasped the two long braids which lay like sluggish sleepy serpents across her enlarged body, and fumblingly tried to twist them into a halo about her head. Felicity's cold, shaking hands arranged the braids. She hoped to quiet him, to find some way for escape. She humoured him, but little hammers beat at the base of her spine and she felt all strength quickly ebb from her heavy body.

"Now you look like her! Beautiful . . . beautiful . . ." The crazed man's piercing eyes were fixed on her, a curious, childish delight glimmering through his tortured soul. "Beautiful . . . beautiful . . . pure . . . my poor wife! Let us pray . . . come, kneel . . . let us ask God for forgiveness . . . let us ask Him to receive us!"

Grasping her icy hands, Lem forced Felicity to her knees and held her there as he whispered his prayer:

"O God, we have sinned—we are vile—impure! We cannot live in our dark misery—we make the final sacrifice! As You forgive the blackest sinner, forgive us—we come washed in blood—blood shed in Thy name—we come, O Lord, in blood and fire . . ."

Felicity strained away, struggled to rise. She must reach the door. She knew Lem was completely mad. Usually gentle to weakness, the abnormal strength of his hands held her back against the table. His fingers closed on her throat, but even in his insane agony he could not do that. He looked into her beautiful, tragic face, twisted into a mask of terrified pleading; his own face was convulsed with nausea. His hands fell.

"I . . . I can't do that. It must be in blood and fire . . . Don't look at me so . . . It won't hurt . . . Soon we shall stand before the judgment . . . Then we can tell the Lord everything and be free!"

Darting to the wall, he took the gun from its place, and, before Felicity could rise, he turned and fired.

She fell forward with a moan and lay still.

He reloaded the gun, then caught up the smouldering baby clothes from the fire and ran about the room igniting curtains, papers. . . . He dashed into the bedroom and set fire to Felicity's bed. . . . Back in the big room, with the flames slowly eating a circle of fire about him, Lem kneeled beside his wife, crying,

"I'm coming, coming with you, Felicity—Madonna—purged with blood and fire. O God, receive us . . . "

Placing the gun to his head, he pulled the trigger and fell across his wife's body.

Felicity, with a torn, bleeding shoulder, dragged herself from under the dead weight of her husband's body and painfully, inch by inch, crawled towards the door. The smoke cut into her throbbing eyes; the frantic, blinding agony of suffocation goaded her body to a miracle of strength. At the wall she pulled herself up by a chair, opened the door, and, on a last wave of strength born of desperate necessity, staggered across the threshold and on a few paces to a tree, where she fell, softly crumpling away in a dead faint.

Here she was found a few minutes later, when Judy, sleeping beside the window in Emma's room, gave the alarm.

It was the Prophet's wife who first reached the burning house, who first discovered Felicity, and who helped the men carry her to Emma's own bed. A trail of blood marked the path up the hill, made its red stain across the big room, deluged the broad, clean, warm bed from which Emma had just come.

But the burned and broken woman breathed . . . low moans came with terrifying regularity. Judy, brave with fright, went leaping through the darkness to summon the doctor. She met him coming up the hill with many others, roused from their sleep to watch Lem Turner's expiation through blood and fire.

None who watched knew that they were gazing upon the pyre of one of the Apostles of the Church of Zion.

Chapter Thirty

THE SPARKS FROM LEM'S SACRIFICIAL FIRE FLEW FAR AND WIDE, falling upon the inflammable nests of antagonism encircling the New Jerusalem. The "City of God" suddenly found itself surrounded by flames of bitterness led by the unreasoning fury of pioneers roused to long-restrained action by the climactic outrage. In Independence, Lexington, and Fayette, mass meetings were called, resulting in severe denunciations of the Mormons and demanding their expulsion from the state. Other villages and towns were next caught in the sweeping blaze until the whole northern part of the state became a raging furnace of defiant resentment. As sparks from a prairie fire leap from section to section, forming great walls of annihilating flame against which defence becomes desperate—even so, when Lem Turner, igniting the tiny garments of Felicity's unborn child, started the blaze in his own cabin, a conflagration rose that spread far beyond the confines of Zion. The countryside became a raging inferno in which no Mormon could safely remain and live.

Until lately the debacle was inevitable, but it might have been delayed beyond that devastating winter of 1838 had it not been for "Mad Lem's" expiation. Thus "Simple Lem," the "Mad Apostle"—too shy to speak aloud while living—turned his body into a flaming torch threatening the extermination of the Church that had wrecked his own pitiful life.

While Felicity's poor body lay hovering between life and death, racked with the pain of burns and a bullet wound in the breast, her delirious mind seemed to follow Lem's into that strange half-world, haunted by demons of fear. She continued to live, but barely that. The miracle of her survival from that fell night of terror was due to the devoted strength of Emma and Dr. Starr—the only two people she suffered to come near her. All others sent her into a screaming hysteria. When the Prophet, genuinely shocked with horror at her plight, approached Emma's bed on which the suffering woman lay, Felicity cried out in terrible invective:

"Take him away—make him leave me—he is the Devil—he will burn me alive—he is mad—O God! save me from the Prophet!"

The voice, high with crazed fear, carried into the next room, where neighbours worked and waited. Joe, coming quickly from the bedroom, tried to reassure them: "Sister Felicity is quite out of her mind. It is no wonder. Poor soul!"

But his white, nervous face and shocked eyes made the people silent. It was many days before Felicity gave Dr. Starr a sworn account of the happenings of that night, and in the meantime

wild rumours circulated, laying arson and murder at the Prophet's door. These rumours of fiendish, diabolical orgies, of sinister abnormal practices flew beyond Zion, aggravating the bitter grievances against Joe and his followers.

The material for the fire had been seven years in the laying. While internal dissension and atrocity—the Prophet's arrogance, the murder of Jarius, the Turner calamity—furnished the tinder, there were more dangerously inflammable materials to spread the flames. These were the religious, economic, and moral anti-pathies of the Missouri pioneers. The basic difference between "Joe's gang" and the "Gentile" settlers, as the anti-Mormons were called, had been obvious almost from the beginning. After the first welcoming flourish in which the settlers had hailed the miracle-workers with the open-eyed wonder of lonely, adventure-loving children, there had arisen a steady and concerted anti-Mormon movement—a movement based on the allegedly sacrilegious notes of the *Book of Mormon*, the irresponsible and autocratic aggression of the Apostles, and, finally, in the later years, the immoralities reputed prevalent among the higher authorities of the Church.

During the first years the fears of the first settlers were confined to the neighbourhood about Zion. In the more distant parts rumours of the magnificent plans for the Empire of Zion were heard with contemptuous amusement; Joe and his peck-stone were subjects for witticisms and derisive jests. But as the small community of Zion expanded by leaps and bounds, as the handful of converts grew into thousands, as the stream of emigration swelled to flood-like proportions, as Mormon churches sprang into being all over the state, as their missionaries plodded doggedly into the far corners of the earth, persistently and successfully exploiting the religious fervour of the ever-ready proselytes, there had slowly risen a semi-organized opposition, whose cohesion and potency increased in direct proportion to the spread of the religion of Zion.

Open hostilities were often averted by the fine simplicity of many of the converts. Entire bands of proselytes with honest, hopeful faces, praising the Lord for having safely led them to the Promised Land, caused the outsiders to hesitate as they wondered what manner of faith these strange people had. The Prophet's warmly clinging hand-clasp, his resonant musical voice, his air of "Hail! blessed comrade!" with the new-comers, stirred all with admiration. It was impossible to believe ill of such a devout, generous, human leader, and of such obviously good and kindly people as followed him.

But later, poking about the hard-earned lands "dedicated to the High Priest, in trust, without restriction, for the Lord's use; whereupon the deeder will receive a greater inheritance from his

Heavenly Father," outsiders began to understand the threatening rumblings amongst the settlers at this confiscation of their lands under the cloak of religion. When it was found that Joe's stores, tanneries, and mills were built by Divine Revelation with the command that "Mormons buy only from Mormon enterprises," it was easy to see why other merchants, driven out of business, complained. And when Joe's Anti-Banking Company—"God's bank and infallible"—refused to yield money entrusted to its care, the ranks of dissenters grew.

A committee of depositors composed of Mormons and a few Baptists from Liberty waited on the Prophet, demanding to see the specie supposedly held in the vault. Joe, prepared for such an emergency, led them magnanimously to the vault, where numerous boxes, each marked \$500.000, reposed in rows. He selected one with a fine show of casualness and, with considerable effort, pried it open. There lay revealed to the worried eyes of the investigators gleaming silver dollars.

"Now, shall we open the others?"

"Yeah—let's see into this one," stubbornly insisted a dour, persistent Welshman—a non-Mormon—who pulled out a box at random, jerked off the lid, and exposed a mass of broken stones to the amazed committee.

"Those are sacred stones—from the mountains of Revelation," cried the outraged Prophet, laying violent hands on the sturdy revealer. "Get out—before the wrath of God strikes you dead!"

He hurried the stunned men from the vaults. But the story spread and did not increase confidence in the Prophet's Anti-Banking Company.

The apostate Mormons played a large part in the events leading to the 1838 catastrophe. All through the seven years of Mormon occupation in Missouri there had been a steady withdrawal of sadly disillusioned converts from Zion's fold. Their hopes defeated, their purses stripped, they fled the unholy city, carrying with them bitter denunciations of their traitorous seducers. Sometimes an entire village would apostasize. In such cases the power of union and numbers gave tremendous impetus to insurgency.

This was the situation of the Campbellite Church in Liberty. Under the Reverend Roley's powerful leadership the entire membership had in 1831 been converted to the Mormons. Pastor Roley, himself converted in that first great Sunday meeting by the miraculous cure of little Jimmie's arm, had in an ardent, impassioned plea swept his congregation into the fold. They had been one of the first Missouri branches of the Church of Mormon. Old settlers all, with lands arduously earned, they had fallen prey to the Prophet's promotional schemes and had

consecrated their lands to him for the Lord's use. Had they not seen the sign in the wonderful miracle? Had they not heard the celestial voice speaking in tongues? Were they not witnessing an Empire rising at their very doors? For a year following that historical Sunday Brother Roley and his defecting Campbellite flock extolled in veritable frenzy the Revelation of the Golden Plates—God's latest word to His chosen.

Then the Lord rebuked Brother Roley and his backsliding congregation in a stern and tragic way. Jimmie's arm at first seemed to heal, but as the months went by it became more and more painful. The bone was enlarged and the flesh red and feverish. The small boy lay whimpering in his hard bed. The summoned Prophet hurried to the house, but the old hypnotic methods failed to work. In response to the low, insistent command, "It doesn't hurt, Jimmie. Come, raise your arm. The Lord commands you!" the boy tried to obey, but at the slightest movement he screamed with pain.

Joe, disconcerted but determined, leaned closer, fixing his gaze upon the feverish eyes of the suffering lad. "The devil is in you, Jimmie! I command the evil spirit to depart. I drive him out."

So saying, he grasped the boy's arm and pulled it upward. With a wild scream of pain, Jimmie dug his teeth into the soft, fleshy hand so cruelly clasping his throbbing arm. Joe, with a startled oath, left the house, sullenly explaining, "The devil possesses the boy. I'll have none of him!"

Despite Brother Roley's pleas, the Prophet refused to return. The boy daily grew worse. They bled him with leeches. Later they slit the arm to let more blood. Gangrene set in. Dr. Starr had been absent in St. Louis, and when he returned, it was too late. Jimmie died in a terrible convulsion, the last stage of tetanus.

Pastor Roley's eyes were opened. In abject, despairing repentance, he made Jimmie's funeral the occasion for his public confession.

"I was tempted by the devil, who came disguised in fair speech and raiment. I led you, my faithful flock, from the true path. We listened to the voice of evil, promising us miracles, wealth, unchristian rewards. In this coffin is God's warning to His sinners. It is a terrible punishment, but God's wrath was justly great. I confess my fault before God and man, and plead with you, in the name of Christ, to return to the one and only inspired Word of God—the Holy Bible. Will all who forgive me and repent, kneel about the coffin of this martyred lad and pledge themselves to the old religion?"

Amid the sobs of women and the prayers of men, the congregation moved forward and knelt about the little coffin while

Pastor Roley prayed God's forgiveness and pledged his flock to the True Faith and eternal war upon the impious Zionites.

Thus the Church of Mormon lost its first mission branch with the two hundred and fifty members and made its first bitter enemies. Brother Roley—whose name on any petition carried weight—became a leader in the state-wide agitation against the false Prophet.

Across the seven years had marched the warring events which built up the strongly opposed attitudes of the Mormons and their enemies. Joe's following, eight thousand strong in spite of apostates, redoubled their zeal and devotion in the face of the persecutions heaped upon their leader. The "Gentiles," seeing these increasing swarms of heathenish brigands encroaching upon their religion, their lands, their customs, their politics, banded together with a vengeance born of hate and fear to destroy or to drive them from their midst.

During this last year a series of catastrophic mistakes had brought to a head the forces inimical to the realization of Joe's dreams of Power and Glory.

In the spring the Prophet had ordered the publication of the *Book of Commandments*. Against the urgent advice of Rigdon and the conservative element in the community, he compiled the complete record of his Revelations from the time of the first appearance of the Angel. The breadth and scope, the incongruities, the absurdities the book presented, furnished just the kind of ammunition the non-Mormons were seeking. Apostle Behr, with his few stolen pages of notes, had sedulously guarded his evidence of the Prophet's errors from the outside world. But here was the Prophet blithely and naively placing himself at the mercy of his enemies!

As Rigdon feared, copies quickly found their way into hostile hands. Too late Joe admitted that his zeal for the cause had driven him to overstep the Lord's commands. The type was destroyed, but the damage was done. Newspapers throughout the state leaped upon the *Book of Commandments* and gave wide publicity to the despotic spirit of the egomaniac who threatened the peace and security of the sober, God-fearing inhabitants.

Then the Jarius murder . . .

Then the double tragedy of the Turners . . .

The fires of hate flared up with a spreading, unsteady, ominous light. . . .

Joe was not unaware of the growing animosity towards him, but his conduct admitted no fears until Lem's suicide and attempted homicide shocked him into a closer scrutiny of his manner of wielding power. Felicity, once so beautiful, moaned her life away by inches there in Emma's room behind closed

doors. The woman's mad cry of fear at his approach stunned him; her suffering presence in the house during the ensuing days haunted him and drove him into other parts of the city. Although he felt and assumed no blame for what had happened, physical suffering sickened and frightened him. He evaded it.

The Prophet was not innately cruel. On the contrary, he had been sentimental, soft-hearted as a boy, ever friendly to animals and children. His first bloody fight had occurred when, as a lad of eight, he had attacked in mad rage a group of older boys engaged in the sport of blinding birds with a red-hot needle. But years of systematic and encouraged selfishness had calloused him—encased him in a hard shell of ruthlessness whenever his personal vanities and ambitions were threatened.

Determined to rise at any cost, he evaded, whenever possible, acknowledgment of pain inflicted on others or rationalized it into means justifiable to his ends. Although he did not tie burning faggots to the tails of little dogs, he could, to serve his greedy ambitions, slit the throat of one and let the blood from its gaping throat describe a red cross, over which he stood as High Priest. Although he did not seek ways to wound and humiliate Emma, he shrugged his way out of all the cruelly unfair situations in which he placed her. Although he did not tell her that the birth pangs she endured in delivering him two children frightened him, he had on each such occasion escaped from the house—fled as far away as possible.

He had not sedulously practised the Revelation regarding the laying on of hands because the visits to the bedside of sick and dying people often unnerved him. Although no one suspected it, his refusal to return to Jimmie sprang partly from the devastating effect of the boy's tortured eyes. The Prophet who could order the brutal murder of an enemy—one who "had proved himself a dangerous traitor to the faith"—could not himself have executed that order. And the man who laughed carelessly over the mental anguish of Lem Turner—"the cuckolded Apostle"—felt his flesh twitch with horror when he viewed the charred skeleton of that same man. Although he felt no twinges of responsibility, the Prophet's sympathy was genuine when he said, "Poor man—mad all the time! If only we had known, we might have prevented this. But the Lord knows best."

And Felicity's slow, tortured hours there under his roof were an inescapable reality to which the Prophet must return when night drove him in. His home had become a hospital—a house of walled pain. Even in his office at the far end he was conscious of the ceaseless dark torment there in his wife's bedroom. The moment he entered his home, Felicity's anguish seemed to form a mysterious link with his own body. It throbbed with dull,

persistent rhythm in his harried brain ; it beat on in the dreams of shallow sleep these troubled times granted.

Sobered by calamity within and gathering storms without, the Prophet had put aside the bottle, and, while granting no quarter, an unspoken truce was declared between him and his Apostles, to whom he gave a more willing ear. Rigdon was with him constantly, working assiduously to stem the rising flames of anger and to stave off the pending legal proceedings that threatened from the state capital.

Joe felt the heat of the fires descending on his Zion.

Chapter Thirty-one

IN THE LATE AFTERNOON OF A NOVEMBER DAY EMMA CAME OUT OF her house and, with slow, measured steps that dragged through sere leaves, climbed the hill to her sanctuary. She was sad and tired from her week's vigil with Felicity and wanted to be alone.

Autumn had come on with slow gentleness that year. Although the recent golden glory of the maples made a rustling carpet for her feet, the mahogany of the oaks, the beet-red of the hickories, and the last shimmering silver of the birch glowed faintly through the autumnal haze that crept silently over the dying earth.

From her hilltop Emma looked out over the gentle ravine to the far reaches of the prairie where the brown corn stood stark and dry. Beyond, an undulating line of woods bravely gave its last breath of colour to a quietly expiring world. The air was heavy with the precious decadent odours of autumn.

Emma's eyes blurred with tears. Strange, inexpressible memories stirred her senses; a sudden sweet nostalgia suffused her. Her throat ached, and, as the tears fell, she heard her own voice moaning, "Oh—I can't bear it!" Clinging to a young birch, whose pale patina leaves drifted silently like lost blossoms about her, she gazed out upon the brooding beauty of a scene whose sympathy with her mood pierced even while it healed. With lifted head, unheeding the tears, she opened her eyes to the fading, sensuous beauty of the evening. She quivered as it enveloped her with the lingering compassion of a departing lover.

"Sister Emma, don't cry like that. I . . . really, I can't bear to hear you cry."

Dr. Starr stood before her. Startled, she turned to him questioningly as she struggled to stifle her sobs.

"I was there, on the ledge below." He indicated the slope to the left. "I had not meant to intrude. I should have spoken the moment I saw you, but—please forgive me . . . and don't weep so."

His deep concern, his intense entreaty, the fine, firm hand impulsively extended and as quickly withdrawn, quieted her. Clinging to the tree, with averted face, she spoke between broken sobs:

"I am ashamed. This is childish. I am all right."

"Sister Emma, tell me why you weep?" There was a deep urgency in his voice that made her respond with quick assurance:

"I don't know . . . I am very tired. But all this—" she made a wide embracing gesture. "The fall is sad, don't you think?"

"Yes, that I understand. I've been feeling it too as I sat there watching the leaves drop. But sadness doesn't make one weep—so hard."

She turned towards him with the frank, deep gaze he had come to know and cherish through the years in which he had worked beside her. Suddenly, with an impulsive determination, he spoke in a low voice:

"Sister Emma, I wish you would take your children and leave Zion—soon—at once. I don't know how much of the Church's difficulties are clear to you, but there is trouble, perhaps very serious trouble, ahead."

She looked her surprise. "Surely you are mistaken—"

"Perhaps, but not likely. Your father has a home in the East. Would he receive you?" He pressed her for an answer, but his quickly perceptive eye caught the darkening look on her face, and he went on: "If you don't want to go there, I have a home in Connecticut. Only my mother is left now. She would be happy to have you—"

There was a brief silence while Emma's direct eyes studied the intelligent dark face of this man she trusted so deeply.

"Why do you say all this to me, Dr. Starr?"

"Because I love you, Sister Emma."

It was said simply, sadly.

"You should not speak so to me." Her voice was grieved. She saw her one friendship slipping away from her.

"I must. There is no other way to make you know why I am ready to serve you—now—or at any time when you need me."

Emma spoke slowly. "I've wondered why you remained here, giving so much with so little reward. You are not one of us. You do not belong here."

"Do you?"

She flushed, but answered with a touch of reserve: "You should not ask that. You have no right—"

"Don't say that—please. I have the right every man has to want to protect—to cherish the woman he loves. . . . No, let me speak. This once and then never again if you so command. You ask why I am here. You say I do not belong. I asked those same questions about you when I first met you seven years ago, and I'm further from the answer now than then. I came West first out of a morbid curiosity. My mother's life was ruined because of the religious fanaticism of my father—I wanted to study the thing at close range. I had in mind writing a book about it. Then the doctor in me crowded that out. People here needed medical care; it was a tough job and I liked it. But you are the real reason for my staying on. I didn't know such a woman lived. You are beautiful, brave, strong . . . but are you happy, Sister Emma?"

It had become dark as they talked. The grey haze had deepened to a purple as the bronze glow on the western horizon melted into the quick approach of night. He leaned forward, peering into her seriously beautiful face as he repeated the question, "Are you happy?"

"Happy? No . . . but I have joy in my children and my life is full. I am needed here. I do not have time to be unhappy. I do not weep often—to-day is the first time in years."

He hesitated. "But your husband? I should not ask, but through all these years—the differences. . . . If you could only see what I mean. There are times when I think you may feel trapped—tragically unhappy. It is then that I want you to know you do not have to remain. You can escape. I would take you—any time—" The man stopped in alarm at what he was saying.

"Thank you. You are good." Emma's voice trembled away to a subdued murmur. "This helps me—in everything. But I must stay. Why?—I don't think I could ever make you understand. I know all there is to know about my husband. And yet, I am not unhappy. You see, I know other things—strange, deep things—hidden from the rest of you. I am bound to him—for good or ill—but I am not afraid. Do not worry about me."

The dark blue velvet of the November twilight fell softly about them. A few stars came out. An enormous, wondering sorrow held them. Without another word they turned reluctantly from the mysterious urge of the dusk and made their way back to the house.

Neither spoke until, near the house with Felicity just a few yards away, Emma asked, "How much longer must she suffer?"

"Not long—God willing," he replied grimly. Then, "Sister Emma, what I said will not make any difference—we shall work on together and be friends?"

"Yes—work together—be friends."

Her voice was low and soft. He sighed, thinking how beautiful, how reposeful she was. Together they went into the sick-room.

Chapter Thirty-two

ALL THROUGH SUPPER EMMA WAS CONSCIOUS OF JOE'S FEVERISH gaze. It was a look she knew well, but for some reason it brought a faint sense of shame upon her this night. Why had she, weary to exhaustion as she was, changed into her blue silk plaid before coming to the table? Joe's eyes upon her throat, revealed by the cut of the neck, gave her a strange feeling of blame. For almost three months now, Emma had lived like a nun. The Prophet had been occupied elsewhere, and she, knowing it, had preferred to evade him. But recently, since the pyramidizing of sobering events in Zion, the Prophet, "off hard licker" and closer to his own fireside, looked upon his wife, again aware of her maturing beauty. Emma, usually straightforward, had been firmly elusive. Felicity's poor racked and dying body brought emotions that far outweighed her feeling of pity for her husband's perennially restive and urgent selfishness.

Supper was an ordeal that night. Aunt Martha, in charge of the sick-room, came in and out, an incessant reminder of pain that pounded upon the neurotic, burning spirit of the Prophet.

Judy, seated between Emma and Sarah, Emma's little daughter, seemed in some obscure way appreciative of Joe's intent gaze upon his wife. Already a lithe, graceful girl of fourteen, Judy was disconcertingly perceptive of much that transpired behind the imperfect masks of people's faces. Intuitive, sensitive, ardent, she worshipped Emma. Her grateful, passionate devotion towards the woman who had mothered her was equalled only by her venomous, implacable distrust of Prophet Joseph.

To-night, waiting on the table, cutting Sarah's food, she glared sullenly at Joe, resenting his irritable rebukes to the child and his greedy, clumsily obvious overtures to his wife.

Judy looked at Emma adoringly. She was beautiful, more beautiful to-night. In the flickering of the candles the young girl saw the faint, light shadows of fatigue, but these made Emma's eyes darker, deeper. The calm loveliness of her face, the strong repose of her body, the unhurried movements of the firm, well-shaped hands, and the peace of her low, tranquil voice—all these Judy knew by heart. But there was something more—a tiny, indefinable quiver of something exciting—added to-night. Judy felt that Joe saw it too. It made her sick.

After supper Rigdon and Tunk came into the house looking harassed and grave. They went with Joe into the office. "There is trouble, perhaps serious trouble, ahead"—so Dr. Starr had said. Emma was suddenly very tired.

"Will you watch until twelve to-night, Aunt Martha? I think I need rest."

"Sure, I can stay this night with you. I think it may all be over before dawn."

"Did the doctor say that?" Emma asked quickly.

"Don't need no doctor to see that the poor thing's hours are numbered. But he did say he'd be back later. You go rest, child. To-morrow may be a hard day for you."

Emma went slowly up to the hilltop. The air was miraculously soft, caressing, mild: the last reprieve before winter, the false spring, more heartbreakingly beautiful than the real because of its fleeting quality. A young moon hung in the western sky, suspended in a haze of lavender gauze. Faintly there came the acrid, tangy smell of burning leaves from the streets below. Alone in her cathedral-like nave of tall, arched trees, she stretched her body full length upon the leaf-blanketed earth and lay on her back, staring at the star-dusted sky through the traceries of branches almost denuded.

Bravely she freed her mind of all exterior worries. Troubles of home, of church, of state, slipped from her as her spirit merged with the intimate, eternal mystery one finds only when alone, face to face with perfect beauty. Her body moved and relaxed with comforting, sensuous abandon into a curve of the earth. She breathed deeply. Her face softened into a childlike, unwondering joy as she drifted towards sleep.

So her husband found her. He took her body with the quick, sharp, unrestrained passion to which she always responded. In spite of its undeterrible selfish insistence, there was in its turbulence something insatiably hungry, helplessly, pathetically young and defenceless.

Emma could not explain to herself the paradoxical nature of her innermost feelings about Joe. For the Prophet she had no tolerance, but to this lover she inevitably yielded with the rich depths of her compassionate, generous nature. Even though she planned not to, always she yielded. When afterwards her mind sought vainly to explain this to herself, she invariably concluded, "After all, I am his wife. I am here!"

And so it was this night. When she had started awake to find him leaning over her, she had been silent, passive under his touch. But when he had taken off his coat, made it into a pillow for her head, she had known what it would be like. She was not deceived by his ardour, by the quivering vibrations of the impassioned musical voice that told her the things which night alone ever heard him utter. She understood him and accepted the brief moment for what it was. . . .

With a deep sigh, Joe rose to leave her.

"I must go to the house. All the Apostles are coming for a meeting to-night." His voice sounded vexed, worried.

Emma, anxious, asked guardedly, "Can't you be more cautious, Joe—in your outside dealings? Why don't you turn state affairs over to Rigdon entirely?"

Quickly offended, he exclaimed, "Sidney! What can he do? No—I trust no one. I'm not afraid of the state. Let 'em bring out their armies. I'm ready! Let them dare march against us! They'll find out what stuff we're made of!"

But Emma saw the nervousness under his bluster.

The moon had gone and low clouds had come into the sky when Joe hurried away down the hill. He had forgotten his coat. Emma sank into a deep lassitude and buried her head in its folds to sleep. . . .

Hours later she came back to consciousness with Judy's hands clutching her.

"Wake, Sister Emma! Come! You must—at once!"

Instantly aroused, she asked, "Sister Felicity—is she—worse?"

"No . . . not Sister Felicity. It—it's the Prophet!"

"What—what is it, child?" Emma shook the trembling girl. "Not—" She could not say the word.

"No—not what you think. But he's tarred!" She whispered the last word. "He looks dreadful. Oh, Sister Emma, I told the men he was up here with you because I wanted them to take him, but I didn't know this would happen."

The girl, shivering with dread, talked in broken, hysterical exclamations which Emma could not fully comprehend. She took Judy's hand and hurried down the hill.

A gang of anti-Mormons had stolen into town and taken the Prophet at his own door just after he had left Emma. A desperate struggle followed, during which Joe, swearing vociferously, kicked one of his assailants on the nose. The infuriated man, his hands covered with blood, seized him by the throat, exclaiming, "Gee, gee, God damn ye, I'll fix ye!" Others jumped into the fray. They quickly subdued the struggling victim and carried him, gagged and bound, to the ravine on the far side of the church, where, amid grim imprecations, they performed their fiendish job.

"Now, God damn ye, call on yer God for help; ye'll get no mercy from us!"

"Where's the tar bucket? Let's tar up his mouth!"

"Ar'n't ye going to kill 'im? Ar'n't ye going to kill 'im?"

"Damn ye, hold up your head and let us give ye some tar!"

His clothes were torn from his body; he was pounded and scratched, tarred and feathered. As they left him naked in the ravine, one of the mob called back to him, "God damn ye, that's the way the Holy Ghost falls on folks."

He had somehow made his way back to his own doorstep, and there Judy and Emma found him, smothering, frantic with

pain—a ghastly sight that sent the two women into screams of terror.

All night they laboured, removing the tar and feathers which had been applied with a brutal thoroughness. Rigdon, Tunk, then Aunt Martha and Emma, took turns in the painful operation of separating the sticky, inky-black mess from tender, quivering flesh. After the first hour of shock, the Prophet steeled himself with Spartan submission to the humiliating ordeal. Neither Dr. Starr nor Judy touched him, but they prepared ointments and bandages for his scarred and defaced body, and guarded the sick-room at the other end of the house.

Some time during the night Rigdon found a paper thrust under the door. He read it, crumpled it nervously, and made as if to throw it into the fire. Joe stopped him.

“Read it—aloud!”

And Rigdon read :

Take warning, you devils, self-styled Sons of Dan! Stay within your city borders. Stay away from the November elections. Put your house in order. Leave us alone. The next time you stretch hemp!

SONS OF VENGEANCE.

Joe's face hardened into lines of grim defiance. “Stay away from the elections, eh? So that's it! Well, brothers, there's work ahead. Here, let's get this damned stuff off!”

Even Rigdon gave grudging admiration to Joe's stoical, unflinching endurance that night. About five they placed him, a mass of fresh, raw scars, on cool linen sheets, gave him a tumbler of strong whisky, and left him to sleep. . . .

Not long after, in that quietest of quiets—the breathless hush before the dawn—Felicity's spirit burned itself through to its eternal release.

Shortly before, she had asked for Emma, who, going to her bedside, found the eyes of the sick woman clear and rational. Emma bent low to hear the words, pitifully laboured, slow, faint—

“You have forgiven me, Sister Emma?”

“Yes, all is well between us, Felicity.”

“Thank you . . . Good-bye . . .”

The sunken eyes closed. She seemed to sleep.

An hour later she was dead.

Chapter Thirty-three

FELICITY DIED WITH HER CHILD UNBORN. IN THAT, LEM TRIUMPHED.

Three days later she was carried in state to the church under an honour guard of Apostles. The Prophet, austerey impressive in his bandaged majesty, led the funeral procession.

A lesser man might have quailed before the ordeal. The recent attack offered ample justification for absenting himself from this last act in the ill-fated Turner drama—a drama in which rumour accused him of murder as well as heinous immorality. But the Prophet had been quick to sense the implications of the fateful forces affecting his destiny. These forces until now had driven him ever upward on the path to Power and Glory. The way had seemed clear, obvious, un-deviating. And now, at the very moment of fruition, he faced failure, complete and irrevocable.

Yet there was still possibility of success, although its attempted realization involved risks and dangers that threatened even his life. For him there was no turning back. His life was so inextricably bound up with his dreams, hopes, ambitions, that without them it was of little worth. Thus, with sure intuition of his Messianic destiny, he turned the funeral of Felicity Turner to dramatic account—"for the defence of Zion and the glory of the Lord!" He endured the humiliation of his physical appearance for the opportunity of dramatizing himself in the rôle of the Prophet, undaunted and tried-by-fire.

Over his mistress' bier Joe delivered to a crowded, wondering audience an oration that carried him to the height of his spell-binding career. Unhesitating, evading nothing, he set forth with startling, hypnotic skill the persecutions which had followed him from the time of his First Great Revelation. As the Church, with the blessing of the Lord, had marched onward in the Divine fulfilment of its world-wide mission, its enemies had grown more bitter, resentful, fearful. And so to-day he suggested with insidious cunning that Lem and his true, loving wife—a faithful Sister of Zion—had been victimized by the vile and scurrilous gossip of those who, "not yet strong enough in purity to comprehend the ultimate, infallible Truth of your divinely appointed leaders, have maligned and tortured the innocent."

His voice was deep and resonant, vibrating now with tragic sorrow, now with tremendous wrath. His greenish eyes, burning with anger, flashed flames of frenzied fire as he excoriated his enemies.

Cries of "Amen!" and "Blessed be our Prophet!" ran through the excited, worry-ridden audience. Harried, furtive eyes

glowed again with new passion ; discouraged hearts beat high with hope revived. The dynamic, defiant courage of the exalted leader inspired them to a frenzied belligerence.

Then his vengeful rage subsided to a quivering compassion.

“They crucified the Saviour. They burned the Saints. They have driven Apostle Turner to an untimely death. They have tried to stain, even in death, the name of our blessed Sister Felicity. They have laid violent, unclean, murderous hands upon your servant Joseph. But will we desert our Faith, our Truth, our God? No, I tell you, a thousand times no! I, for one, shall remain faithful to the end. With my life, if necessary, will I defend the Light God has revealed to us. To that end I dedicate all the powers divinely bestowed upon me. Repent! Follow me! We shall triumph over the Philistines!”

More than the words, the manner re-inspired the wavering Mormons. That day the Prophet conquered. Even Apostle Behr and the malcontents were moved. Faced with a common enemy—the outside menace—inner strife was suspended. The children of Zion presented a united front to the enemies of their Kingdom.

It was late afternoon when they left the church, bearing to the little cemetery near the site of the Temple the once beautiful Felicity, whose now wasted body imprisoned the Prophet’s unborn child. The day exhaled the last breath of autumn. As they stood about the grave, a birch tree shivered, let fall the last of its delicate silver leaves, which drifted with compassionate little whispers upon the faithful, staring into the gaping grave.

Joe prayed. With head devoutly lifted into the pale sunshine and tears filling his eyes, he was swept back, God-like again, into the simple, yearning hearts of his people.

Women sobbed, strong men trembled, thinking, “How noble he is!”

Emma, dry-eyed, thought, “He must have loved her.”

Dr. Starr reflected, “Mad! Mad! Dangerous!”

Certain young women, secretly sure in intimate memories, wondered, “Would he pray so beautifully if I were dead?”

Only Judy, feverishly, sullenly intent, looked on the man with hatred and contempt. . . .

At this very hour three hundred citizens, convening in the county court-house, were passing stern, denunciatory resolutions against all “Mormons in the State of Missouri.” A manifesto, after enumerating in detail the grievances against the Mormons —“the depraving influences of these fanatics and knaves”—demanded; first, that no more Mormons shall enter the State of Missouri; secondly, that those already here shall pledge themselves to leave within six months; thirdly, that all Mormon

shops and newspapers shall immediately cease operation: and, finally, that all the effort of the people be forthwith devoted to the business of removing the entire sect beyond the borders of Missouri.

And on this same day, at the state capital, a committee of influential citizens met with Governor Boggs to plan ways and means of exterminating the Mormon menace which threatened to "overwhelm our western civilization—to destroy the very foundations of the Republic."

The Prophet's answer to the manifesto was to strike from his presses the "Clarion Call to God's Battle," which concluded with the latest Revelation:

"Verily I say unto you, My Brethren, that notwithstanding your recent sins against the Faith, you shall triumph over all enemies of the Holy Church. Ye shall drive them forth from the land that I have given you. My wrath is soon to be meted out to your persecutors. Therefore, be of good cheer and follow the banner of My Prophet, Joseph."

This challenge was distributed throughout the surrounding country.

But Joe's enthusiasm for the cause had overrun his shrewdness. The enemy answered his insolence with determined action. The irate Missourians declared a "war to the finish." Their assaults and depredations became more and more numerous and violent and too often inflicted tragic loss and bitter suffering on the innocent. Haystacks were burned in the dead of night, houses were stoned, movable property—horses, cattle, wagons—was stolen from the outlying farms.

On the day of the election, the Prophet, despite warnings, marched at the head of a large band of armed men to the polls where the Mormons cast their votes. Returning after dark, they were fired on from ambush, and three of their number were killed.

A few days later the historic "specie circular" from the United States Treasury, demanding that payments on government land be made in specie only, placed in the hands of state authorities the needed weapon for attacking the undesirable Mormons. The authorities insisted that Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon answer to charges of violating the banking laws.

The Prophet now saw the logic of what Rigdon had pointed out: that to defy the vindictive blustering of a scattered pioneer population was one thing, but that to oppose the governmental authorities was quite another.

Nevertheless, the Prophet bent all his energies to fortifying Zion, and particularly to extending the activities of his secret organization, the Sons of Dan. Under the dramatic spur of the guerilla warfare looming daily more serious, it was easy to

appeal to the Mormons to join. Members of this organization took solemn oath to sustain each other and their church—to protect, defend, and obey their leaders, even unto death. They were given secret signs “which must be acknowledged, even at risk of life.”

“We warn our enemies to desist from persecuting us. If they do not, it shall be a war unto the end. Remember this, all men!”

So spake the Prophet as he administered the oath during the midnight ritual.

Although the Missourians did not openly attack the city of Zion at first, they terrorized smaller Mormon communities throughout the state. In retaliation, the Prophet swung his secret avengers into the fray. Armed bands clashed openly; blood flowed almost daily. The once peaceful countryside lived in terror of the prowling bands that pillaged, burned, killed. . . .

Steadily, ruthlessly, in spite of the counsels of those urging moderation, the country about Zion plunged into an orgy of lawlessness that threatened the complete breakdown of the law. The opposing bands vied with each other in the perpetration of more daring and ghastly outrages. The Mormons in a night raid swooped down upon Gallatin, making away with arms and munitions, and killing seven of the town's inhabitants, but their own dauntless leader, Captain “Fear Not” Patton, the Danite leader, later fell mortally wounded before the shots of avenging citizens.

The Gallatin attack roused the opposition to fury, and they took quick revenge in the Hawn's Mill massacre. Thirty Mormons, seeking refuge in the blacksmith shop, were surrounded and slaughtered by the infuriated, relentless mob that marched upon the building. Sticking their guns into the apertures of the undefended log house, the besiegers mowed the helpless men and women down mercilessly, threw the dead and dying into a deep well, and set the building on fire.

Distorted accounts of these outrages spread like wild-fire not only through Missouri, but throughout the entire nation. Newspapers printed editorials, some attacking, some defending the Mormons, but all demanding that “something be done to quell the lawlessness in Missouri.” The Governor, informed that the Mormons planned to sweep across the state with an army of four thousand, and angry because they had voted solidly against his party, became alarmed and issued his infamous, ill-advised “Order of Extermination”:

“All Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the state!”

On reading the order, Prophet Joseph struck a Napoleonic pose: “It is war—to the death!”

He assumed the rôle of Generalissimo with a lusty, cheerful enthusiasm that reassured the faintly questioning spirits of his men. He ordered breastworks to be constructed, he collected arms and ammunition, he drilled his cohorts in the science and art of warfare, he segregated the women; in short, he prepared for the siege of Zion. These days of feverish activity brought the fighting Prophet a kind of intoxicating joy. Had he not dreamed when a boy of leading the armies of the Lord into battle for Truth and Justice? Was he not fulfilling his destiny? Was he not a hero, leader, militant Prophet to whom all bowed in acknowledgment of his genius? Would not whole nations eventually honour, perhaps deify him as another Saviour, as one who brought salvation to mankind?

Joe talked, walked, thought like a general. He instituted the military salute, and the two thousand organized soldiers went about marching and saluting with an awkward seriousness that delighted the Prophet's love for colour, action, drama.

Only Rigdon foresaw the end. But Joe, flushed with the magnificence of his new rôle, received his pleas for conciliation with contempt. "You're just a fussy, jumpy old woman. Run along home and hide in the feather-bed, Sid. We'll see that nothing hurts our little lady!"

But Joe's delusion of grandeur was brief. The day before Thanksgiving Zion was surrounded by the state militia. Slim Shanks, who had mysteriously appeared when trouble mounted, brought word that there were close to three thousand men under arms. Joe's picked scouts, sent to reconnoitre, corroborated this and brought added information which left no doubt about the state's "meaning business."

The Prophet knew he was beaten. He forgot to salute as he hurried home, called Emma, and said with characteristic finality, "This chapter is played out. I'm going to surrender. I can't let our people be slaughtered like cattle. We haven't a chance against the militia."

Emma's pale, serious face tightened a moment, then flooded with a strange light as she impulsively exclaimed, "Oh, Joe! I am glad—I am proud of you for this!" Suddenly, with a little cry of relief, she threw her arms about her husband and clung to him like a grateful child. Her voice was choked with joy. "I've prayed you'd stop this battle. All these poor people! They trust you, like God. Now you *are* their Prophet! The state won't dare hurt you!"

The two stood, startled, even frightened. It had been so many years since Emma had voluntarily caressed him that Joe, for a moment, was amazed. He held her gently, awed. Then, aware of the strangeness, she drew away, asking quietly in her low voice, "When will you surrender?"

"Now—before dark!" he replied in a voice none too steady.

An emissary was dispatched with the white flag to the enemy's camp and returned shortly with the word that the Prophet and Rigdon must give themselves immediately as hostages, pending the evacuation of Missouri and the surrender of all their firearms. This had been anticipated. Joe was ready. He summoned the Apostles to his house and with the sharp, shrewd wisdom he often evinced, instructed each in his grave responsibility during the imprisonment. Under the stern, binding oath he imposed on them they were to supervise the removal of the people to Quincy, Illinois, where a strong Mormon colony existed, and where, they had reason to believe, a hearty welcome awaited them. A mass meeting at the church was hastily assembled, and the Prophet, with his perennially magnetic power to lead, to infuse faith and courage—even in the face of imminent disaster—lifted them into a state of exalted, resolute ecstasy.

"The Lord has told me what to do. I go—a hostage—to save you, my faithful, and the True Church of God. You have proved yourselves willing to defend me and the Church. Now God demands that I do as much for you and Him. Have no fear. We go, clothed in the protecting armour of righteousness. Not one hair of our heads shall be touched if ye are faithful. Pray for me while I am gone. Though our days be dark, the Kingdom is not far distant. We shall find another home, away from the persecutions of the heathen, and there build the mighty Church that God has destined to command the earth! Farewell, my beloved, and God be with you!"

His glorious voice was strong, solemn, ringing. With a firm step, eyes straight ahead, he walked from the church, Rigdon beside him, pale, sick, silent.

As he came to the outskirts of the city, he paused and spoke words of assurance to his soldiers drawn up in a double line. He turned to embrace his wife, to lift their children into his arms, to lay his hand in blessing upon the adoring faithful who pressed close to the heroic man of God. . . .

When he and Rigdon went out into the late dusk, under an escort of honour, to surrender, the people burst into loud Alleluias and wild, hysterical prayers for their safety. If amid the mad pleadings there mingled venomous oaths against their persecutors, they went unheeded.

The Mormons, Prophetless, were children crying in the dark.

The next day—Thanksgiving—brought with it a raging storm of wind and rain that had by noon settled into bitter cold and sleet. It congealed the mercurial spirits of the Mormons, boding

ill for the hard task ahead. Leaderless, dire fears seized them, and by night panic ran riot through Zion.

Instead of the orderly, gradual evacuation enjoined by the Prophet, the people began hastily to pack their belongings, throwing such things as they could carry into the limited number of covered wagons in their possession.

The first group of refugees, led by Apostle Piatt, started out of Zion in the storm that Thanksgiving day. They were bound for Quincy—the nearest exit from the persecuting territory of Missouri.

Emma's kitchen had for days been preparing a Thanksgiving feast—reminiscent of Harmony days—for the Apostles, their families, and all the lonely ones. But the fantastic twist of events turned her Thanksgiving feast into a hurried meal for the departing. With a "Farewell and God be with you!" she pressed upon them a large basket of food and sent them on their perilous journey.

Despite the frantic appeals of Apostles Behr and Tunk, the panic spread throughout the city, and during the first week in December the flight from Missouri turned into a devastating rout that made the pathetic march across the storm-ridden state a trail of untold tragedy and loss.

At Behr's insistence his family, including Frieda and her young son, entrained for Kirtland, Ohio. They were joined at the last moment by Sophronia Doolittle, hysterically desperate to return to the blessed security of Methodism in Mantua. . . .

The Prophet and Apostle Rigdon were taken prisoners, incarcerated in the county jail, and formally charged with stealing, larceny, murder, arson, and treason. This news, reaching Zion the following day, completely dissipated what morale the stancher Apostles had managed to maintain. In wild confusion, amid a maelstrom of oaths and prayers and imprecations—terrifying doubts and fanatical faith, despair and avowed vengeance—the Prophet's "faithful" fled Zion in much the same manner as another storied flight eight years earlier.

Brigand bands, quick to detect the disorderly, pitifully defenseless plight of the fleeing Mormons, fell upon them, killing, robbing, persecuting. That winter of 1838—one of phenomenal, stinging disaster—decimated their ranks with pneumonia, malnutrition, and exposure. Some, seeing only ruin ahead, apostatized, threw in their lot with settlers in the little towns or squatted on the prairies in whatever kind of a habitation they could find. But these were few. Most of them, dull-eyed, dumb with cold, hunger, terror, pressed painfully eastward towards Illinois, where promised shelter awaited them. Throughout the winter the accursed train crept on, marking with graves, with blood and tears, the first Mormon "Trail of Martyrs."

Emma, sore of heart, stayed on in Zion until the end of December. A dozen families remained with her. They had done their best to sell, to salvage, what was possible from the wreck of eight years' labour. Emma's calm reasonableness and passionless dignity impressed the astonished Missourians with whom they treated. It was largely due to her tact that a little money was realized from the once glorious capital of Zion.

On Christmas Eve thirty-six souls—all that remained in the city—met at the Prophet's home for their last meal together. They too were to entrain on the morrow for Quincy. Dr. Starr came early to talk with Emma. With set, determined face he spoke to her.

"Again I beg you to leave all this, Sister Emma. Return to New England—with me if you will, alone if not—go back to civilization—to safety for your own and your children's sake. What kind of Christmas is this for them? Look!" He gestured toward the packed cases, the bare walls, the empty shelves. "Think of what Christmas Eve might be—for us—for the little ones—where it is warm, safe, kindly . . ."

"Don't—don't, Dr. Starr! I must not think of it!" The look of wistful longing he had seen on her face changed to one of severe self-discipline. "I know what you think. Sometimes, in the night, I think such thoughts too. But I always come back to the same conclusions. I married—for better, for worse. I chose to follow him. The children are his. And now he is in prison—" She hesitated, said appealingly, "He could have got away, you know. I can't desert—I just can't. I'm not like that—although you—but please don't ask me again."

He gazed sadly into the fire, then asked slowly, "Would you rather I didn't go with you to Illinois? Shall I return East?"

The woman drew a quick breath. "No, unless you want to return for other reasons. Come with us—we need you; I need you—my friend!"

The doctor perceived the flash of fear at his question. "I shall stay . . . I shall not be idle."

The New Year of 1839 found the Prophet's destiny dark and uncertain. The brilliantly illuminated Power and Glory road over which he had hewn his conquering way was suddenly enveloped in a midnight, starless black.

New Year's Eve the Prophet was in jail.

Mormons—homeless, penniless, scattered—crawled slowly towards a distant new home of vague, uncertain possibilities.

The wrath of the world seemed bent upon them.

Zion—fair city of eight thousand—lay abandoned, defenceless prey to errant despilers.

Emma, in a covered wagon, with her two children and Judy huddled close to her side, joined the long train of refugees. Again Slim Shanks led the way, the driver of her horses. Again she looked out to say a silent farewell to a home which had driven them forth.

Refugees . . .

But Emma's eyes were wise, sad, tearless. Drawing the blankets closer about the child in her arms, she faced the East—and another home.

Chapter Thirty-four

THE GENEROUS HOSPITALITY ACCORDED THE REFUGEES BY THE canny politicians of Illinois did not spring from the Good Samaritan qualities of their natures. The fact was that the state badly needed new settlers, increased voting power, and more tax-payers.

Illinois in the year 1839, while still a pioneering country of less than a half million inhabitants, had succeeded in contracting a debt of fourteen million dollars and such an unsavoury reputation for corruption and wild finance that prospective new-comers were frightened away. The prevailing lawlessness acted as a further deterrent. Squatters defended their hard-earned acres by sheer force against the ever-increasing bands of desperadoes that trickled down from the wild northern counties. Might was the law of the land. Dissatisfied groups set themselves against dubiously elected authorities, on one occasion burning a court-house and erecting a fort to defend themselves against the officers of the law. Theft and pillage of timber were so riotous that landowners paid so much per sermon to the peripatetic clergy to preach against the dire sin of "timber hooking."

In spite of these hazards, the politicians offered alluring baits to prospective settlers. The national political situation created an especial reason for teasing immigrants into the state. The Whigs had nominated General Harrison for President, and the country was soon plunged into an exciting political campaign. Illinois, shrewdly cognizant of the voting power of the Mormons, determined to establish them in ample time to use their vote in the election.

To that end a committee of Whigs made public a scathing denunciation of Missouri for her persecution of the innocent Mormons. The *Quincy Argus* declared that Missouri was "now so fallen that we could wish her star stricken out from the bright constellation of the Union." Apostle Rigdon, in a communication to the Church's missionaries, avowed that the Governor of Illinois, together with his lady, would head a committee of Governors to Congress to denounce Missouri and to secure redress for the afflicted Church. Governor Lucas of Iowa Territory presented Rigdon with letters to President Van Buren, recommending the bearer as "a man of piety and a valuable citizen."

And so the Mormons entered Illinois amid a fanfare of editorials and oratory rising ostensibly from indignation against the bigotry of the persecutors and from sympathy for the sufferings of the persecuted. Unquestionably, many genuinely

felt such commiseration. For the most, however, the Mormons were decoyed into Illinois by business and political strategists eager to increase the power and population of the state.

One Pierre Fey, armed with impressive letters from leading politicians, visited the Prophet in his Missouri prison, seeming to the restless man to be, in truth, an Angel from the Lord. The land which he offered to the Mormons at a seemingly nominal figure and with easy payments was one of the great military tracts set aside by Congress as bounty land for the ex-service men of the war of 1812. It had been purchased by Fey for speculative purposes, but as yet it was uninhabited except for the lawless ruffians who hid themselves in its deeply cut inlets, precipitous ravines, and wooded hills. Joe, impressed with the authoritative stranger, had, with convenient speed, received a Special Revelation, which instrument Fey carried to Rigdon at Quincy.

If the plight of Illinois actuated the opening of her doors to Joe's people, the Prophet's prompt acceptance of the welcome sprang from the urgent need to get his people organized and settled as quickly as possible. Daily the exiles straggled into Quincy with stories recounting the terrors of their flight when, their leader in prison, they found themselves at the mercy of their violently infuriated enemies. The Apostles had been hauled before improvised grand juries, consisting of rough, lawless frontiersmen who judged them by day and guarded them by night. Indicted for treason, murder, larceny and arson, the leaders had been subjected to insult and mistreatment. Frequently, the juries celebrated their inquisitions with drinking bouts. Excited by grog, they boasted of their persecutions, of murdering Mormons, of stealing property, of burning homes! Often they burst into song, the chorus concluding with the refrain,

God damn the God damn Mormons,
We've sent them straight to hell!

Imitating the antics of a camp-meeting, they shouted, clapped their hands, jumped about the jail rooms, waving whisky bottles and falling to the floor as they shrieked, "Hosannah, hosannah to the Lord!"

As these travesty trials proceeded, angry mobs had descended upon Zion, determined to drive the disorganized and fear-stricken Mormons from the state. Cattle and hogs had been stolen; granaries fired; men, women and even children taken prisoners, lacerated with hickory withes and deprived of food until they had been forced to gnaw the bark from the trees to which they were bound.

Frequently the mobs had been led by clergymen who cal-

culated to drive them Mormons straight to Hell! One of these gangs turned a young widow out of doors, forcing her to flee with her two children, one a babe in arms. She had found refuge with a friend only after struggling miles through snow and wading the ice-sheeted water of Slippery Creek.

Now weary, disheartened, ill, the Mormons limping into Quincy told the story of their expulsion from the state which a few years before had promised them hope and salvation! The citizens of Quincy, listening aghast to such incredible tales, opened their hearts and gave the poor creatures first-aid, food, clothing and medical care. As the stragglers poured in, however, in constantly increasing numbers, the facilities were soon exhausted. Mormon leaders recognized the necessity for locating permanent homes right speedily lest they lose many through defection.

Illinois wanted the Mormons, but the Mormons needed Illinois!

For the time all schism, all faction, vanished. Though somewhat ironic, it was true that the expulsion saved the Church from disruption. The evicted, penniless Zionites, who had left behind them some three hundred martyrs to the flaming cause, rallied to the common purpose of saving their religion at whatever personal sacrifice. Under stress of possible annihilation, individual bickerings were forgotten.

What prosperity failed to do, disaster accomplished. . . .

Emma's train crossed the frozen Mississippi to Quincy in mid-January. The townspeople, offering her the hospitality of their finest homes, would have made much of her, but she preferred to live close to the sad, brave people with whom she had suffered persecution. She took simple rooms near the refugee camp and was always available to her people, who turned to her with dumb, unquestioning trust. Her gentle, firm way made possible the execution of Doctor Starr's gigantic tasks. But even together they were powerless to prevent suffering, disease, death—three enemies that stalked the country that winter. In the middle of bitter cold nights Emma would wake, trembling with the knowledge of so much distress; daily she looked into the eyes of death and walked home, disheartened; and daily, returning to her own children, she took heart—for them and the other life she carried in her body. She had never felt so alone, so impotent against the ruthless cruelties of man and nature.

She tried to pray, but found she could not, even alone, talk to the only God she had ever really trusted—the Presbyterian God of Justice tempered with Mercy. She thought wistfully, sadly, of that God of her childhood and longed hungrily to turn to Him, to plead for His help in all their troubles. Joe's con-

tinued imprisonment made a great fear to grow in her. She had wanted him to give himself up; if he never returned to them, to her, was she so sure that she had done right?

Hurrying home from the refugee camp one Sunday night, she passed a lighted church. The strains of a familiar hymn came out to her. She stopped, stood quite still to listen, and with incredible suddenness turned and walked impulsively up the steps and into the church. Unnoticed by the standing, singing congregation, she slipped into a back pew. Inside, aware of the daring of her impulse, she trembled fearfully. Seated, she drew her shawl closely about her lower face and remained, a frail ghost at the feast, through the simple, familiar service. . . .

The years fell away. She was again in Harmony. The organ, the choir, the soloist, the altar, the white-haired clergyman—all were the same. She listened achingly, only the lump in her throat preventing her voice from mingling with the others.

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help,” read the quiet voice of the thin, stooping clergyman.

As in a dream she heard her own voice responding, “My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.”

The music, the sermon, the prayers, all intimately familiar, slipped over her with the warm soothing of beneficent waters. Part of her listened to words, but most of her, softly relaxed, lived again in the past. She was in the little stone Presbyterian church in Harmony. There, on the right, in the second pew were her mother and father. Behind them was the entire Steward family. There sat Frank Fetter. She gave a start! The back of that head surely resembled one she knew well. Shaking herself slightly, she brought her thoughts to the clergyman and his closing prayer.

“Bless, God, the strangers within our gates. We pray thy especial blessing upon our new neighbours, who have sought a refuge from religious oppression across the river. Deal kindly with them in their dire need, we pray Thee. Lead them gently into health and happiness again. Restore to them, from the unjust wrath of their enemies, their friend and leader, Joseph Smith.”

Stunned, quivering with a curious mixture of emotions, Emma left the church. She felt guilty, a culprit taking secret joy to which she had no right. But stronger was her feeling of comfort. She felt blessed, strengthened. It was joy to know that her God still lived—that people talked with Him to-day as in the Harmony days.

The stinging wind dried the bright tears that gathered in her eyes. As she hurried along the dark, narrow street, she found herself praying—as though in unison with the devout she had

just left, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name . . ."

A few minutes later, when she came into her home, Judy, watching over the children, looked up at her in surprise and asked in trembling delight, "Sister Emma, has something good happened? You look so—so light—and rested!"

Chapter Thirty-five

THE ARRIVAL OF THE PROPHET IN QUINCY IN EARLY SPRING WAS the signal for intense rejoicing. With his people gathered again at his feet, although weary and ill from privation and exposure, he told the story of his tribulation from the hour in Zion when he had given himself up to the enemy, "as a hostage for you, my people," to the night before, when, disguised as a pedlar, he had crossed the river to join them.

As he talked, the old fervour came back to the husky voice, the ecstatic gleam to eyes too bright with fevers recently endured. Dramatically, tersely, with a fine feeling for the nuances, he spoke, and the story lived before their eyes. They saw him in the dirty, polluted Missouri prison; they heard him condemned to be shot; they watched tensely as he faced death unafraid, sure of God's protection:

"The night after the Judge passed that perfidious sentence, God struck him dead! The people grew afraid and had my sentence stayed . . ."

Loud cries of gratitude burst from the pallid, tragic-eyed listeners at this proof of God's care of their Prophet. It was some time before Joe, in a voice shaken with emotion, continued the story of his escape:

"The Lord confounded mine enemies. They dared not lay hands on me. Like Pontius Pilate, they wanted to be rid of their prisoner. They decided to take me to St. Louis. One night as we sat at dinner in the inn, the Lord laid His hand heavily on the sheriff, and he fell into a profound slumber. As he slept, I heard a voice commanding, 'Go! The horse stands saddled at the door. Fly swiftly to My chosen, who await you in Quincy!'"

The Prophet paused for breath and effect as shuddering relief swept his quivering, excited followers. In their utter faith he seemed to find a miraculous restoration, for in but a very few days he was again in command of his forces, accessible to all who needed him.

The Prophet's sojourn in Quincy created a sensation eclipsing the prominence of all others in the city at that time, among whom were many of national as well as local importance. The tall, gaunt, rugged Abraham Lincoln, and the small, polished, suave Stephen A. Douglas—later to burn their names into the destiny of the growing nation—were there, but could not compete with the bold, handsome fellow who wore the Prophet's mantle with a careless, swaggering ease that captivated the attention of Quincy society.

To the invitations which poured in upon them, Joe responded with an eagerness that surprised his wife. "For the sake of the

cause we must go," he said, when Emma, sunk deep in her work, demurred against dining luxuriously while Mormon children went hungry. But in the end she always acceded to her husband's naïve eagerness to shine before men.

Joe's travail had left chastening marks upon him. Suffering had tempered his arrogance; a siege of pneumonia had left him thin and weakened; months of solitude had lessened his paranoia and increased his capacity for sustained and rational thought. Having glimpsed possible annihilation, he had become more practical and more realistic, less inclined to delusions of grandeur, more willing to rely upon reasonable adjustments to actual conditions. In short, he was a saner man.

While grateful for this change, Emma, paradoxically, felt maternal twinges of pity for his chastened mood. And because he attacked all the ugly, discouraging complications of migration with feverish responsibility, she could not refuse him the pleasure of dressing up and going to the fine houses of rich citizens to dine from heavy linen and rare china. They were honoured guests—toasted, acclaimed, deluged with sympathy and attention.

Emma moved among these first families with a quiet, serene dignity that gained for her a deep respect as the proper wife of the brilliant spiritual leader. But it was the Prophet's entrance that brought a hushed thrill upon the guests. He was indeed a striking figure at this time, more startlingly attractive in his post-prison attenuation than at any other time of his life thus far. His great height, stripped of all obesity, was alive, virile, gracefully erect. His longish face had matured in the past ten years; his Roman nose, full, sensuous mouth, broad, firm chin definitely cut, his high forehead—each showed the weathering effect of time and penetrating experience. But the mass of wavy, auburn hair, encircling the fair, clear skin of his face with a glittering halo effect, emphasized his youthfulness. The spell of the man, however, now more than ever, centred in his eyes. Of a peculiarly greenish-blue, keenly penetrative, they were always a sure topic for conversation. His enemies pronounced them indirect, shifty, wickedly hypnotic; his followers declared them to be wise, clairvoyant, God-like. All admitted their fascination.

Joe had learned much since he left Palmyra. Quick to appreciate the advantages of education, of culture, of the amenities, the chameleon-like quality of his agile, retentive personality silently, secretly, appropriated all it could absorb from others. His contacts with business men, clergymen, politicians—even when they had been his persecutors—was turned to good account. He moved among the distinguished citizens of Quincy with an air of stately self-possession becoming to the Pontiff of Zion. He was the hero of the hour, and the élite of the town,

ever seeking new darlings to amuse and distract them, lavished their restless attention upon him.

And so at Joe's insistence Emma bought a new evening gown for the Morgans' grand soirée, the party of the season, given on the very eve of the Mormon departure for the New Jerusalem. The élite of the city had been summoned to meet and do honour to various distinguished guests stopping in Quincy that day in April 1839. Among those present were Senators, bankers, ministers, railroad men. There was a famous lady novelist, who fell enamoured of the Prophet and hoped to follow him to the new Zion. There was a young French artist, but recently arrived to paint the Morgan children. When, in the hush of expectancy, the Prophet, tall, imposing, flashing, entered the room with Emma on his arm, Jacques Beauvais startled the silent guests by exclaiming, "*Quel ravissement, qu'elle est distinguée! Qui est-ce?*"

Emma was beautiful—paintable. The *décolleté* of her wine-coloured velvet dress bared her fine shoulders and firm, rounded arms. Her gleaming black hair, looped over her ears and gathered into a heavy knot at her neck, defied with its simple arrangement the elaborate coiffures of the other women. She wore no jewels, but her clear skin, tinged with the pallor of hardships recently endured, intensified her deeply-set, luminous eyes, more alluring than diamonds. All felt about Emma what the perceptive Frenchman had expressed. She was *distinguée*! She was a person—a character. Jacques Beauvais, disarmingly frank in his admiration, fell into despair when, upon requesting to paint her portrait, he discovered that she was departing on the morrow for that new land yet farther north on "*Le grand père des eaux.*" But undismayed he begged for "*un rendez-vous pour cet été dans le nouveau Paradis!*"

The soirée moved with the stately, gracious, precise dignity that the time, the place, and the guests demanded. Emma, on the arm of her host, was moving through the long room when her heart suddenly began to beat anxiously. Her face drained of colour; she stopped still, her fingers tightening on Mr. Morgan's arm as she asked, "Who is that man—just entering?"

Following her gaze, Mr. Morgan replied with a casual smile of pleasure, "That—why that's Frank Fetter, an attorney from Springfield. He's one of Illinois' coming men, I assure you. Allow me to present him."

There, approaching her with self-assured poise, was a curiously familiar, yet unfamiliar, figure. Across the space of thirteen years Emma recalled a country boy, sulkily yet deferentially demanding that she marry him in the morning. She had a sudden vivid picture of her last glimpse of him in the sunny kitchen, hat in hand, a downcast, puzzled expression on his honest, determined face as he slowly, despondently left the old Harmony

home. She heard again his mournful words, "I'll always love you, Emma, whatever you do!"

Could this attractive, well-groomed, already partly grey-haired man approaching her across the polished floor with such self-possession possibly be that humble, pleading boy—her father's clerk, the boy who wanted to marry her?

Now they were facing each other. As in a weird dream, she heard Mr. Morgan say, "Madam Smith, may I have the honour to present our distinguished friend, Mr. Fetter?"

For a moment they looked deeply into each other's eyes. Both started to speak the words of recognition, but each was checked by something that begged impulsively, "Not here—before all these people!" It was not fear or shame, but something tender, wounded, that cried out from the past. And so the moment for speaking their old friendship passed.

Frank bent over her extended hand. "It is a great honour, Madam Smith."

He passed on. Emma, who had merely bowed in reply, felt her husband's eyes upon her. He, in turn, when presented to Frank, acknowledged the introduction without recognition of his one-time rival.

Although Frank was often near Emma throughout the evening, he found no opportunity to speak to her alone. In handing her a cup of coffee, their fingers touched and her "Thank you" trembled faintly across the table. She could not raise her eyes to his. Frank left early. As he came to Emma to say good night, their eyes met and held. Again they spoke silently, secretly: "We understand. It is better . . . later. *I am* glad to see you." . . .

In their little room that night Joe sat near the open grate, broodingly watching his wife remove the wine-coloured dress and carefully fold it away in the trunk. Suddenly, without prelude, he asked simply, "Are you sorry you married me instead?"

Emma looked at him across the dimly-lighted room. He was slumped into the low chair, his head cupped in his large hands. The fire flickered across a face stripped of all defence, all pretence. His thoughts, too, had been wandering back through the lost years. He, too, had been softened, touched by the unanswerable questions that inevitably follow in the path of reminiscence.

She did not answer at once. He urged her: "Tell me, Emma. I guess I can stand it."

But under the grim humour she caught again a glimpse of the man he might have been. She answered slowly, "No . . . I'm not sorry . . . I'm glad I took you, Joe."

A sudden light, of triumph and of gratitude mingled, leaped into his eyes. He crossed the room swiftly and gently took her into his arms.

Chapter Thirty-six

EARLY IN APRIL 1839, THE STEAMBOAT *GEORGE WASHINGTON* made its first trip from New Orleans to St. Paul. Cautiously ploughing its perilous way through the chutes, races, snags, chains, sawyers, and rapids that choked the surging flow of the swollen upper Mississippi, the barge-like craft hove at last in sight of the new divinely-appointed home for the persecuted Mormons. Some five hundred weary, silent refugees stood on the hurricane deck, gazing intently towards the slowly approaching Illinois shore. What they saw made them catch their breath. Could such beauty be possible? Perhaps the pale glimmering of the early morning sun, shining through the thin haze that hung over the vista spread before them, created the enchantment. Perhaps it was but a mirage, soon to vanish mysteriously into thin air. But as the broad boat warily rocked nearer, the extraordinary loveliness of that portion of the mighty Mississippi became a tangible reality which again stirred their tired hearts into something very like hope.

Emma, pale and ill, sat near the prow of the boat. Her little son slept in her arms; her daughter and Judy crouched against her, their wide unbelieving eyes intent upon the magic unfolding before them. The Prophet stood near among a band of wondering Apostles. Ma Smith, hysterical with excitement, her feverish eyes agog, her claw-like hands for ever clutching things, rushed from person to person, exclaiming over the wonders of this latest miracle. Along the rail of the crowded deck huddled groups of discouraged Mormons, pitifully, courageously following the gaze of their leader as it surveyed with satisfaction the site chosen for the resurrected Church of Zion. As they peered incredulously into the expanding magnificence of this God-given new kingdom, the leaden inertia on their devastated faces gave way to wonder, to a childlike awe, that anything so fair could really be.

Into Emma's sensitive face came light. The lines of fatigue softened as she looked ahead and upward, her perceptive eyes drawing into her consciousness the rare beauty of a scene that brought consolation to her difficult life. Nowhere along the Mississippi had she looked upon a more picturesque spot. From the river's edge a succession of gentle terraces ascended to a superb eminence on a gracious circular elevation, beyond which stretched miles of green undulating prairie—a site pronounced worthy for the Temple of the Kingdom of Zion. The graceful westward bend of the river, describing a great horseshoe curve, almost completely encircled the peninsular eminence, whose sides, in an expansive, sweeping decline to the water,

were covered with groves of tall oaks and slender maples, interspersed with winding vistas. In the adjacent ravine, running along the river's edge, delicate white poplars and birch, edged with the faint yellowish-green of virgin foliage, swayed lightly in the morning breeze. Across the river, almost two miles distant, the austere limestone cliffs of Iowa formed a mighty protecting wall, as if to guard the refugees from all the miseries the vast hinterland on that side of the water had inflicted. On the Illinois side, at the base of the talus slopes of the hill, the shore line drifted irregularly into marshes and rice-swamps, now clad in gracefully bending grasses, from which red-wing black birds, wild ducks, innumerable gulls, and a few great blue herons, frightened by the glaring furnace and murky smoke of the boat, darted frantically into the sky.

The river at this point struggled against a number of wooded islands, their banks tinted with the green of rushes, marsh grass, sedges, and cat-tails, while below it quietly disappeared like a broad beam of light into the dim distance. The acropolis, towards which the boat slowly zigzagged its way, seemed to mark the river's end. There was something final, ultimate, permanent about that eminence lifted above the ceaseless, restless flow of the surging river. It was as if it had been placed there for a purpose—for them. It seemed the Holy Mountain of Zion.

The Prophet was seeing for the first time the place made known to him some months before when he was in prison. Under the immediate charm of its unanticipated beauty, he felt the return of his old confidence—a confidence that had all but destroyed him as well as his dreams of Power and Glory. But now, what splendid justification of his prophecies! What better proof that God had not forsaken him? What greater assurance that manifest destiny directed the lives and fortunes of the faithful ever devoted to the true light, the wonderful vision, of the Church of Mormon?

Emma saw her husband's stooped shoulders straighten, his emaciated face tighten in prophetic intensity, as he cried in a loud voice trembling with emotion:

“God is our fortress and our strength, a mighty rock in time of trouble. Behold, comrades, our Zion! Our home! We shall call it Nauvoo, which in Hebrew means ‘a beautiful place.’ Down on your knees in gratitude for our deliverance out of the land of the enemy. Let us pray!”

He fell to his knees, lifted his face into the strengthening morning sunlight, and prayed—his vibrant voice rising to intense fervour:

“Great and just God, your servant Joseph kneels in thanksgiving that again Thou makest Thy face to shine upon him. Sorely Thou hast punished us, Lord, for the doubts, bickerings,

and dissensions that have divided our purposes. We know Thy wrath to be justified. Thy servant Joseph, during three months in prison, lived in hourly communion with Thy revealing Angel. When Thy voice commanded that I lead Thy children to Nauvoo, 'set high on the hill on which a mighty Temple shall rise,' in that moment I knew my deliverance was at hand. Yea, Thou hast led us out of Egypt into the land of Canaan. Lord, we are here, ready to enter into our rightful heritage, to establish ourselves for ever, in the name of our religion, for which we live even though we die. Amen!"

The deck of the chugging steamer presented a strange sight—hundreds of humbled Mormons kneeling in prayer, the pale, flickering April sunlight playing over their lifted, ecstatic faces. They were shabby, unkempt, devastated by months of persecution in an unfriendly land. Wrapped in blankets or rags and surrounded by such pathetic stores of goods as had escaped the ravages of their harassed flight, they made a sorry picture. Children, too weak to complain, huddled against the lean bodies of the pioneer women who had survived the unspeakable horrors of the last months.

But the alchemy of their leader's voice transformed them. As the light of ecstasy suffused their haggard faces, tears streamed from sunken eyes over gaunt, weather-beaten cheeks. Their murmured "Amen!"—"God be praised!"—"We're coming home to Zion!"—swelled into a rapturous chorus—a curiously frightening music to the wild birds that darted from the marshes and circled wildly over head.

Emma gazed compassionately upon the wretched creatures, who, mesmerized, again followed the call of their Prophet. Then her fine dark eyes turned wonderingly to rest upon the empyrean face of her suppliant husband. But she felt her gaze drawn away—to Doctor Starr, who, alone, detached, kept guard over a sick child. Only a moment their eyes met; then, with a strange sense of guilt, she turned away, folded little Joseph closer under her shawl, and joined in singing the Mormon hymn of victory.

On the landing, now quite near, stood Apostles Tunk and Behr with a band of the faithful, the advance guard, waiting impatiently as the boat manœuvred a landing. They had been here for some months, building in obedience to Revelation temporary shacks for the reception of the gathering refugees. Long separated from their families, they anxiously scanned the deck of the steamer, looking for their own. Often they found the ones they sought, and frenzied cries of greeting flew back and forth across the indifferent water—"Hallo! Little Andrew!"—"Thank God, there's Mary!" Then the faces of some would cloud as their searching eyes failed to find the younger children

—children whose weak, emaciated bodies had quickly succumbed to the ruthless plague of the dire winter.

While the excitement of these happy-sad greetings mounted, a man left the shore in a canoe paddled by Indians and was carried swiftly to the side of the retarded steamer. Grasping the rope thrown down, he climbed quickly aboard and made his way among the astonished people to the Prophet. The two greeted each other effusively. Joe presented him to the Apostles, then led him to Emma.

“Sister Emma, this is Brother Pierre Fey, the Lord’s agent in directing us to this divine spot. It is through his sagacity and generosity that we have found our new home. He is our delivering friend. I commend him to your good graces.”

The stranger made a sweeping bow, and Emma found herself looking into a dark, Latin face, whose hawk-like nose and inscrutable, deep eyes gave her a little shock of surprised fear. But his urbane, suave voice, coloured with a slight French accent, spoke pleasantly.

“It is, indeed, a great pleasure to welcome you—the First Lady—to the New Kingdom.”

Emma responded with calm courtesy, but the others, crowding about the Great Rich One, whose name during the exile had become a symbol for salvation, looked upon the impressive stranger with humble veneration—all save Doctor Starr, who bowed curtly, a look of instant aversion upon his face. Only Emma noticed the doctor’s dark expression, but it gave her a vague uneasiness which marred the almost joyous relief of the last arcadian hour. She was tired of homelessness! Surely this was Nauvoo—the beautiful place! Already she could see her cabin rising on the slope of the gentle hill. Although the stranger was not exactly her idea of the Lord’s messenger, his generous offer of his land was surely the hand of Providence. Still, Doctor Starr’s frown disturbed her. To secure her timidly dawning sense of peace, she turned again to watch her husband, who had come to life, who again burned with a restless zeal to build an Empire, to take possession of a Promised Land!

The close of the day found the Mormons gathered around a large camp-fire for the first religious service in the New Jerusalem. It grew into an experience meeting lasting far into the night, the brethren recounting the harrowing events of that phenomenally bitter winter of 1838–39. Death, illness, hunger, bitter cold, flight, despair were the themes of their melodramatic tales. Strong men wept as they told of loved ones lost by the trail; tears fell unheeded down the firelit faces of mothers who clasped a child in arms that ached for those others whose little bones marked the laboured trail from Zion, Missouri to Quincy, Illinois; children, fatherless and motherless, who had been swept

along with the others, crept into the shadows, frightened and lonely.

But now the dark days were gone. Spring had come, and with it new hope—new promise.

This April night they eased the burdens of their hearts as they poured out their woes before God and their brethren. It was comforting to weep together, to draw close about the camp-fire again. And their Prophet spoke to them, his voice throbbing with compassion, his eyes filled with tears.

“Oh, my brethren! My faithful ones! My blessed! Would that I had been with you to have shared your fate. Like Job of old, we have been sorely persecuted. Though we may not fully understand the reasons, we know that by our faith we shall triumph. Like one other we bow and say, ‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.’ God, in His infinite mercy, hath spared us, hath brought us victory. Our enemies shall yet bite the dust; we shall see them abased, humbled, their bodies fed to the buzzards, and we shall rise to heights ye dream not of.”

With strengthening voice, he continued :

“My beloved, I can sympathize with your hunger, your sickness, your fears for the dangers that have lurked behind every bush and tree. For a month I, too, was a wanderer. Travelling stealthily by night, hiding by day, begging for food, I made my way across that wild country, driven on, sustained by the divine light which led me to you. In Quincy I found the hand of God still at work. Illinois has invited us to this our new home; she has given us land; she has promised to help us. I tell you, my brothers, my sisters, my children, that one year from to-night you shall see this spot covered with your homes and enterprises. Here will rise a beautiful city, swarming with happy, prosperous people. Our sufferings are past. God has revealed His face; He smiles again. We shall wax strong and powerful. Let us sing unto His mighty works!”

The exiles, loath to break the spell that mysteriously bound them together, silently gave thanks unto the Lord, who, in His infinite mercy, had brought them into the Promised Land—land they could call their own, land free from the persecutions of those who could neither see nor understand.

And their Prophet—God’s Prophet! To doubt his omniscience would be an offence against the Lord. What if Brother Joseph did not always observe the codes of common mortals? Was he not a Prophet? Who else but he could have united their broken forces? Who else but he could have led them into this land of Canaan?

It was growing late. Emotions spent, their minds at rest, the weary people moved reluctantly away to seek lodging for the night. Even the broken-hearted, lonely ones felt warmth of life

again. All carried to their rough beds the Prophet's blessing: "Have no more fears; you are safe in the harbour, at home in the new Zion." . . .

But even as he spoke, from the gracefully bending grasses of the swamp lands below there rose a new enemy, more stealthy and more deadly than any they had before suffered. It invaded their camp that night as they slept, unaware, blindly happy in their new home. Emma's little girl was the first victim of malaria. She died within a few days, and her grave was the first in the rapidly extended cemetery that lay close by the river, ceaselessly flowing, indifferent to the hopes and fears of the bewildered beings inhabiting its shores.

Chapter Thirty-seven

THE UNDIMMED JOY OF THE MORMONS IN THE NEW PARADISE WAS short-lived. As they became aware of thorns and serpents in their Zion, the first exultant outburst was modulated to a more thoughtful strain. Joseph and his brethren had arrived just at the beginning of the spring thaw, and within a few hours an epidemic of chills and fever warned them of a new enemy. From the picturesque marshes along the river there rose the insidious malaria germ, which invaded their hastily and crudely constructed camp, striking old and young alike at a time when they were least prepared to resist the merciless attack. As fever stalked among them, they crept to their work with faces flushed and had to be helped back to their barrack-like quarters, trembling with chills that shook them from head to foot.

Dr. Starr, with the help of Emma, took over one of the more substantial buildings as a hospital and segregated the victims. Emma had become wise and resourceful with the sick. None too strong herself now, nerve-racked from the sudden death of her daughter, constantly ridden by worry for her little son, she yet found time and energy to stand by the Doctor's right hand as he laboured in his tragically handicapped work. And Dr. Starr turned to her hourly; where his nervous, abrupt orders brought only sulking resistance from a distempered, doctor-shy people, Emma's serene, persuasive sympathy led them docilely to the hospital and to treatment. The Doctor laboured feverishly and continuously, but a sudden glimpse of tired pain in Emma's eyes would bring him to a sharp realization of her need of care. He would command her peremptorily, "Go home now and to bed. Don't get up for dinner. Have Judy give you a bowl of soup. Sleep—doctor's orders!"

Emma, leaving the dragging horror of that long, barren room with its rows of pitifully wasted, yellowed human beings, upon whose brows the damp of death was gathering, would step into the mild, innocent sunshine flooding the sweeping beauty below her. How could anything so softly, tenderly green as the grassy marshes harbour such sinister dangers? It seemed incongruous, an evil dream—those gaunt, feverish, shaking people she had left! The little children—pale, thin, timid creatures they were! She thought of her own little boy with a pang of dread. Joseph Junior was sluggish and weak, but she and Judy had spared nothing to protect him. She had done everything Dr. Starr suggested, but this new disease could spread with silent, secret stealth, striking the moment one's back was turned. Emma found herself overwhelmed with an unspoken fear.

Panting a little from her quickened steps over the rough path

that led up the gentle rise to her home, she stopped at the crest of the hill and caught her breath. The involuntary joy that sprang to life each time she came upon this view of the river had become a rare, important moment in her day. Nothing could diminish or sully the sheer ecstasy of that instant when, upon achieving this high prominence, there lay before her the tranquil, majestic scene—a scene that wove itself into the very texture of her life, colouring, ordering, sustaining its rhythms and patterns. Already, after one month of living beside the Mississippi, she felt herself somehow related to it. The destiny directing its unceasing flow from the far reaches of the North to the great gulf of the South seemed also to direct the turbulent flow of her life. As in the river, so in her life, there were chutes, races, rapids, and little enough that she did divert the course from its inevitable channel. Forces wholly outside of her, whose significance she but dimly perceived, drove her onward, but to what end or purpose she could not conceive.

The woman's tired body—grown clumsy with the child she would bear in July—pulled its strong, fine length erect, as with seeing eyes and quivering nostrils she drank the amazing beauty and fragrance in deep, full draughts—"beautiful . . . glorious . . . Nauvoo . . . it is home!" After this brief moment of release she was again calm, serene; she could enter the stone-nogged frame house to care for little Joseph with new courage and new hope.

The Prophet meanwhile wrestled with the legion of devils loosed to thwart the rehabilitation of the children of the Lord in Nauvoo. In a frenzy of flaming determination he fell upon each enemy with an energy, an undiscouraged assurance, that kindled the drooping spirits of his followers. He went without food or sleep; he was everywhere at once—in the marshes, directing the Gargantuan task of drainage, of attacking their deceitful comeliness before another rainy season set in; on the hill, coaxing the men into greater efforts on construction; with Apostle Behr, laying out new streets; in the hospital, cheering the sick—continuously organizing, presiding, preaching, exhorting, joking, pleading, commanding, burying. . . .

During this period he took no recourse to Revelations. It is true, he went among the sick, laying on his hands in healing, wiping their clammy brows with his handkerchief, praying over them or joking with them according to their needs, pronouncing them healed even when he heard the death-rattle in their throats. But he did not obstruct Dr. Starr's work; he knew well the chances he took with contagion, and when Death got the upper hand to snatch away another victim, Joe sorrowed over him and pleaded frankly with God to intercede—to spare Zion's children more losses.

It was at this time that "Pap" Smith, the Patriarch, departed this life in a manner befitting the erstwhile poacher's quaint habits. His penchant for high places had led him to climb an oak tree one fine May morning to observe the work on the house being constructed for him and Ma Smith. Reaching into his pocket for tobacco, he slipped and fell some twenty feet to the ground. He was picked up with a broken neck—quite dead. Without a cry or a muscular spasm he passed away in the moment of his crash, his last sensation being one of a swift flight through space. The Patriarch, well immunized by his whisky diet, had withstood all the terrors of pioneering; he had survived poverty, persecution, malnutrition, pneumonia, malaria . . . but his seventy-year-old bones, although spry, were brittle, and so when he fell the break was clean—and fatal.

The brethren paused in their labours to give "Pap" a fine funeral. A sort of mellow reminiscence pervaded the service. Although few really regretted his loss, all wished him well in heaven and the eulogies pronounced over his thin dry corpse would have made death quite worth while to the queer little man, who to the very day of his death carried his worn copy of *The Adventures of Captain Kidd* in the pocket of his patched trousers.

Emma truly sorrowed for him. She had never ceased to be grateful to him for his timid silent sympathy in those first trying days when she had come, a bewildered bride, into the confused Smith household. She had been far more patient with his senile idiosyncrasies than had Joe. Her quiet tears and Ma Smith's banshee-like wailing were the only mourning notes that attended the Patriarch's last journey. . . .

The situation in the city reached a crisis that May. Early in the month the first large contingent of new converts from Canada arrived. Headed by the Blackwells, obviously people of means and intelligence, the coming of two hundred additional people at this time was unfortunate, taxing as it did the city's facilities to the limit. Audrey Blackwell, the delicate young wife, was ill. Emma, goading her already spent strength yet further, took the woman and her little boy into the Prophet's house. Simultaneously with the arrival of the Canadians another rainy spell set in, stirring the malaria-infested swamps to a fresh fertility.

Audrey Blackwell had been a patient in the house little more than a week when Dr. Starr, coming from her room one day, his face white and grave, said to Emma, "I think it's diphtheria. We must move her immediately."

Emma's face blanched. "How can we? Where would we take her?" Then with sudden compassion she exclaimed, "She is so frail—so unused to hardships. It can't be done!"

"Sister Emma, you will regret your tender heart some day."

The tone was both angry and sad, but he did not argue. After all, the damage had been done. He contented himself with attempting segregation, with putting the little boy under Judy's care in a far part of the house. But the precaution was futile; little Joseph fell ill with the disease. In spite of the doctor's protests and the Prophet's pleading, Emma moved the boy into the room where Audrey Blackwell lay, and, with only Aunt Martha to help her, established herself as nurse. When word of this last calamity spread among the brethren, a pall fell over the city. All prayed for the stricken. A public service was called to beseech God to keep Sister Emma and her patients safe. Although the Prophet continued his work, his face now took on a harassed look, his eyes clouded with worry.

The days dragged on. Doctor Starr made the trip twice daily up the hill, but always he left heavy of heart. There was so little one could do—so little was known. He wished mightily that he could talk with other doctors.

It was a losing fight from the first. The little boy, poorly prepared for the siege, fluttered hopelessly against overwhelming odds. Then one midnight in late May the little spirit flared up for a last gallant recognizing gesture to the *mater dolorosa* bent tenderly over him, flickered down, and went out into the great darkness.

Emma, heavy at heart, rose dully from the bed and walked into the night. It was clear, cool, still. The impersonal stars flickered with a calm, cold brilliance that mocked her. A gentle breeze made a happy little soughing through the newly-leaved trees. The sardonic cruelty of such peace and beauty in nature tore at her heart. She walked to the oak bench at the edge of the cliff and sank heavily, lifelessly, upon it. No tears came—only the dull, scarring pain, the inarticulate, weary agony, wrapped up in the knowledge of that wasted, terribly still little form in the dimly lighted room back of her. And the night moved on—stars, wind, spring fragrance. It was all crazy—hideously cruel!

Then from far below there gradually penetrated to her burning, suffering brain the sound of the river. Slowly, insistently, its deep, eternal rhythm floated up to her, closed round her, entered her being. Slowly tears began to fall. Then, rising on a released tide of woe, Emma wept. She stretched her heavy body face down upon the wide, rough bench and gave herself up to an abandoned sorrowing. Great sobs shook her; words, mixed, meaningless, fell from her soft, quivering mouth; little prayers of childhood, pet names she had given to her boy, fears, loneliness, distraction—all the dammed-up emotions of years of sorrow flashed by in these inarticulate words, as she lay sobbing under the midnight sky. . . .

At dawn, as if in sorrow for the unhappiness she had brought, Audrey Blackwell's spirit fled the fatal house. When her distraught young husband had placed her, clad in her wedding gown, in the rough casket, Emma and Joe took their little son and laid him in the dead woman's arms.

"Now, you won't be so lonely—down there," she whispered in a tense, low voice. Turning the child's head towards the woman's breast, she drew the stiffened arms of the frail, young wife closer about the little boy. Oblivious of the others, she went on: "Sleep there—warm and close—together—not alone—better for both of you—so—hold him close, Sister Audrey—I shall care for your little Ted—do not worry—I shall mother him—"

Chapter Thirty-eight

BY MIDSUMMER THE HORRORS OF THAT FIRST SPRING HAD GONE THE way of all pioneer tribulations. Consumed in the great enterprise of building the Holy City, the Mormons found few moments for dwelling upon their personal miseries. From dawn until sunset the women planted, hoed, spun, wove, baked, and cooked, while their men felled, split, quarried, hauled, sawed, and hammered. At dusk, after the long day's work was finished, one could see women kneeling among the two hundred graves in the cemetery. Their City of the Dead was made to blossom brightly with wild flowers transplanted from the colourful prairies. What tears were shed over those fresh graves, what dull pain settled upon lives robbed of their dearest, were things not known. With the full of summer, Nauvoo took on new life. Under the blazing Illinois sun the corn grew and ripened in the fertile, virgin fields; neatly ordered gardens flourished; wild fruits, varied and plentiful, hung heavily upon slender stems. The land was beautiful to look upon, and songs of praise and glory echoed through the city.

The Prophet had completely shed the physical indolence that had previously marked his life. He laboured with his hands; he co-ordinated his forces; he inspired confidence and admiration. There was the new city to be laid out—larger, finer, richer than the Missouri Zion; there were roads to be built, North, South, and East, to welcome the converts; there were docks to be built to facilitate river commerce; there were trips to be made to the neighbouring towns, the county seat, and state capital; there were important men to be interviewed in behalf of the city's political interests.

Throughout the summer and the following year the secret of Joe's success was fully revealed. His driving energy, his flaming ambition, his limitless faith in himself, together with his hypnotically impressive way with people, were in the ascendancy; his selfish egotism, his vacillating temperament, his indolent, phlegmatic mood, and his reckless indifference to the feelings and opinions of others were in abeyance. At no other time in his fatally undisciplined life did he so completely forget himself. Not that his work was wholly disinterested; he was faced with the necessity of saving both himself and his people, of rescuing from disaster his ambitious schemes. The challenge was one upon which he threw himself with an abandon that had in it no false braggadocio. It was a battle to save the religion, and for once the Prophet forgot his divinity to fight as a man, with the result that he took on the proportions of a god. In no other crisis did he make fewer mistakes. While the luck-star shone

over Nauvoo, it shone brilliantly. And Joe was heroic in the day of his success.

The city was a model of town-planning. With a river frontage of more than two miles, it rose on a quick incline from the water's edge to the site of the Temple. This expansive area was laid out in generous blocks, divided by wide streets, and interspersed with numerous parks. A spacious boulevard, lined with newly-set-out elms, wound its way up from the Mississippi to the heights above, where handsome stores, orderly shops, a general meeting-house, a printing establishment, and various small industries were already provided for. The water front, transformed from a germ-infested marsh into a gracious park, never failed to arouse the admiration of strangers landing in the city from the river side.

Joe marshalled his forces with the efficiency of a general. Upon Apostle Behr there fell the task of planning the outlying regions—of providing for farms, villages, and connecting roads. Apostle Armstrong was despatched with six brethren to retrieve the printing plant buried at Zion on the eve of the flight. By July they had returned triumphant, and by August, under the editorship of Donald Sayer—a young teacher who had emigrated with the Canadians—there appeared the first issue of the official publication, *The Times and Seasons*. To Timothy Blackwell, already created Apostle, was assigned the business of devising legal protection for the city. A young lawyer of great ability, he drafted a charter and bills, later to be introduced into the state legislature.

With the city's local affairs well under way, the Prophet and Rigdon journeyed to Springfield to lobby for the Blackwell bills. The Whigs had been actively friendly to the Mormons, but with an election imminent Joe was not above listening to the promises of the Democrats. The two weeks in Springfield were filled with adventure for the diplomatists. They were much sought after by the leaders of both parties; as honoured guests they dined in wealthy homes, where they were initiated into the mysteries of state politics. Through all of these intriguing affairs the handsome Prophet and his distinguished Apostle moved with an assurance of welcome and an awareness of their importance.

While they were in Springfield, a train of some two hundred Mormon converts passed through the city on its way to Nauvoo. This party, prosperous farmers from Ohio, was of an unusually high order, and the canny politicians, looking to the November elections, were impressed. Thereafter they courted the Mormon leaders more ardently—almost obsequiously. And the Prophet, with the dexterous hand of a skilled diplomat, flattered both parties and all interests until no doubt remained but that he could have what he wanted.

Elated by their Springfield success, the ambitious pair journeyed to Washington to secure redress from the Missourians. Here, to a lesser degree, was enacted another triumph. Although they did not attain their objectives, a personal interview with President Van Buren and various other dignitaries brought them to certain national recognition upon which to trade later. Washington received the Prophet with moderate cordiality. The Congressional leaders to whom he appealed were non-committal about disciplining Missouri, but, to a man, they expressed deep regret for the persecution.

In the early autumn Joe and Sidney, national heroes, returned to Nauvoo to find the city a bee-hive of activity, the town rising rapidly, spreading over the hill and out on to the prairies. They marvelled exultantly.

In the meantime Pierre Fey had taken up residence in the city and had become a valuable emissary in expediting the city's political hopes. Fey's entrance into the drama had been smooth and deft. Although described by a Springfield cleric as "the most dangerous scoundrel in the West—an unprincipled, profligate, thieving liar," this same divine admitted him to be the brainiest man he had ever known. Pierre's heterogeneous career, covering thirty years of Illinois history, ranged from practising medicine in Springfield to counterfeiting money in Chicago. In his early days he was connected with the notorious Cressak gang, whose reign of terror ended with the death of many of its members and the flight and secretion of Fey for over two years. He was secretly proud of his counterfeiting skill, and occasionally, when inebriate, would relate the delightful story which proved, beyond quibble, his genius in the art. In this instance he had taken his handiwork to a bank president, pretending suspicion of the man from whom he had allegedly taken the money in payment of a debt. The banker pronounced the bills "genuine, an especially fine job of engraving." Whereupon Fey exchanged them with the banker for specie and hastily departed that section of the country.

Such youthful peccadilloes had given way in later years to a safer and maturer scallawagery; he had become a land agent. Buying up great government tracts in the North-west Territory for eastern syndicates, he forged deeds and clouded titles until he came into possession of a large part of central western Illinois and eastern Iowa.

But his sharp dealings had not made him warm friendships; he had reached the limit of this game. Consequently he did not trifle with the Prophet, in whom he recognized an equal. When he visited Joe in Missouri, he laid his cards on the table. He owned land—plenty of it; if Joe would bring his Mormons to Illinois, they could all work to mutual advantage. Fey would

make the Prophet a power in Illinois ; he would make the Church of Mormon the religion of the state, the country, the world—in short, a paying proposition.

In the rising new Zion Pierre could live safely from his enemies and yet be of service to the Prophet ; so it was that he adopted the Faith and came to live among the faithful. He achieved instant popularity with the people. His dark, flashing eyes, ready wit, and Latin suavity awed the stolid, serious-minded children of Mormon. His shrewd reference to his “medical career, cut short by ill-health and the need of outdoor life,” adequately explained to the unsuspecting his phenomenal success as a land promoter. Those who did suspect said nothing ; he was useful—better to forget the past.

Under Fey’s directing genius, together with Blackwell’s legal ability, the political machinations of the Prophet were completely successful. With master strategy they had set the stage for a dramatic coup. For the 1840 elections they could deliver about five thousand votes ; this meant that they held the balance of power in state politics. With Whig and Democratic leaders vying with each other to speed the success of their parties, the Prophet drove a hard bargain, which brought him the famous charter giving Nauvoo an autonomy that virtually made it a state within the state. The minority opposition was not slow to recognize that the privileges of the city in many instances took precedence over the statutes of the state and endangered the liberty of all non-Mormons living within the area of its jurisdiction. The city was authorized to organize a court system designed to protect the Prophet and his brethren from any legal action that might arise against them in Missouri (for Joe was a fugitive from justice!)—a right not accorded any other city in the state ; it further authorized the city to maintain an army, entirely independent of the state militia and subservient to the command of the Prophet, whose power was exceeded only by that of the Governor.

Joe’s first act was to pass resolutions thanking the Illinois legislature for their “forward-looking liberalism and honourable devotion to justice” ; his second act was to make himself mayor of the new commonwealth.

With the same shrewd judgment evinced in his political intrigues, Joe now organized his proselytizing forces for the world-wide conversion of non-believers. He planned his project with the greatest deliberation and care, listening carefully to the advice of Rigdon, Tunk, Blackwell, Sayer, and Fey. The problem was complicated ; not only must he send out his best and most trusted followers, but also here was an opportunity to rid himself of certain irritating or too intelligent devotees by assigning them to the foreign field. Working secretly with his

special committee, the Prophet perfected his campaign. Then, with all in readiness in the autumn of 1839, he had a Revelation —the first in nine months:

“Go ye, Jonathan Armstrong and Emory Peer, into Canada to preach the gospel of Mormon. Ye shall carry it to all peoples. Go ye without purse or scrip and reveal My word as spoken to you through My Prophet Joseph. Convert and send to My Kingdom in Nauvoo all who will hear and be saved.”

This command was delivered in writing to each pair of the chosen “fifty” one morning in late November and it carried consternation into each of their homes. So quietly had the plans been laid that the Revelation, scattering many of the best men in the community to the four corners of the earth, shocked the humming city into grave pause. But only briefly. The evangelical zeal inherent in every true convert triumphed over hesitancy, and to a man the “fifty” responded. They were sent to England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Turkey, Hindostan, Malta, Australia, the East Indies, the Sandwich Islands. . . .

Brother Alters, an illiterate but ardent convert from Pennsylvania, who was assigned to Iceland, expressed the feelings of his fellow missionaries when he said, “I can’t quote much of the Bible, but I’m ready to go forth and tell people I’m a minister of Zion and that I carry a message direct from the Prophet himself calling on people to repent and be baptized.”

To England and the northern countries were despatched the super-salesmen of the Faith—the orators, spell-binders, and irresistibly persuasive. Apostles Hurlbutt and Piatt, already in England, had written for “seasoned workers to garner the English harvest. We have need of a man of education and intelligence, a good talker who can answer questions and make the legal requirements for shipping the converts—somebody like Brother Sidney.”

Here a brilliant idea swept into the Prophet’s mind—why not send Timothy Blackwell to Liverpool? Joe had been wondering what to do with this too intelligent young lawyer from Canada now that the charter had been secured and there was no particular need for him in the city. So Timothy went to Liverpool. He left behind in Nauvoo his beautiful young sister, Alice, upon whom the Prophet looked with pleasure.

Emma observed this latest project of her husband with misgiving. As she sat before her house, rocking the son she had borne the Prophet in late summer, she looked into the ochreous haze that hung over the river below and thought of the fifty families, their disrupted homes, their lonely hearths. . . . It was all for the Faith and their husbands would return eventually,

but the future hung on such a slender thread that the sorrow of even a few years seemed too great a sacrifice. She shared the loneliness of these unhappy people. Then, as she thought of her husband again caught in the whirling vortex of great inscrutable forces, she sighed, knowing full well that the lust of Power and Glory had once more swept over him.

Chapter Thirty-nine

THE BRITISH ISLES PROVED FERTILE SOIL FOR THE MORMONS. Although the Prophet sent his missionaries into all the world to preach the Gospel, he sent his strongest and most eloquent exhorters to a land where there was no language barrier and where the fruit seemed ripest for the harvest.

Apostles Piatt and Hurlbutt had established Mormon stakes in London, Liverpool, and Glasgow as early as 1836 and had already sent over some three hundred converts to carve out destiny in the Land of Promise.

The first missionaries were quick to detect the conditions most conducive to fruitful recruiting. Great poverty, the desire for "a bit of land all one's own," and the implicit faith in the United States as the land flowing with milk and honey were sufficient reasons for starving, credulous beings to rally round the rotund Piatt and the lean Hurlbutt. The emigration from England had been checked during the year of wandering in the Missouri and Illinois wilderness, but with the founding of Nauvoo, the missionaries went forth to conquer the world. The "Nauvoo Immigration Fund" was established to transport the penniless. It took about fifty dollars to ship a convert from Liverpool to Nauvoo, but once arrived, he would be permitted to repay the borrowed sum in honest labour. The rising city needed workers—strong, tireless peasants to quarry the Mississippi granite, to build the Temple, to construct roads over which the world would find its way to Heaven. Fifty dollars was a cheap price to pay for a lien on a man's strength, but it was a blessing from God to drudges who otherwise could not escape from the servility of their lives in their native countries. So the call to Zion was strong, clarion, hospitable, and the response was quick, eager, enthusiastic.

In a year's time two thousand foreigners had crossed the Atlantic and found their way to the shining city then rising in splendour on the eastern shore of the brown Mississippi. Almost every boat leaving European ports for New York or New Orleans carried in its shell—usually in the steerage—a band of patient, hopeful, devout converts. A few were Swiss, Scandinavian, French, German, Polish, but by far the greater number came from England, Scotland, and Wales, and of these Wales supplied proportionately far more than any other. . . .

Not far from Newport, Wales, on the river Usk, many great gatherings took place, and from Newport as a base "the new American religion" flew through all the country. It became the flaming bush whose light brought lustre into dull, heavy eyes. "Nauvoo"—"the modern Prophet (a poor, ignorant man like

themselves!)—"the Golden Plates"—"the Land of Plenty"—"God's Rich Kingdom"—"Sons of Jehovah"—"Princes in Zion": these became the watchwords to which they capitulated, many becoming ardently fanatical and in turn proselytizing among their neighbours. When other sects, particularly the Methodists, aroused by the alarming exodus of their own members, attempted to expose the "False Prophet" and his impostures, the converted denounced their former leaders. But as the anti-Mormon feeling grew, they were forced to hold their meetings secretly, often at night, and to baptize by moonlight or torchlight in secluded places.

The first to succumb were the very wretched and the very poor—peasants and day labourers ground down by want and servitude. To these the magnanimous Piatt promised an earthly glory scarcely to be imagined this side of Heaven:

"Nauvoo is a vast land of untold riches, of limitless plenty! The black, rich soil makes grain and fruit to ripen before our very eyes. The forests and quarries provide ample material for each to build his own palace. What the Lord gave us by Revelation, the law of Illinois has legalized for eternity. There is no want or illness, neither sorrow nor weeping, but life and abundance for all who heed the words of God and His Prophet!"

The childlike, wind-roughened faces, listening, believing, took on light. They begged to go—soon—soon—to this Heaven. Mill hands and miners from around Lancaster and Manchester, whose meagre wage pittance kept them slaves to crowded tenements and the drab, sunless days of smoke-clouded skies, were equally affected.

To these the poetic Hurlbutt declaimed: "In Nauvoo, where God rains manna on His chosen, we live as the Lord's children lived in Eden, in a Garden of Paradise, under the perpetual blue of sun-kissed heavens, across whose bosom float soft, white clouds—all about us forests of pine, spruce, hemlock, walnut, mighty trees, beneath whose sheltering wings we may sit while we watch the majestic flow of the great Father of Waters. Nauvoo is God's Kingdom on earth; there all is harmonious, beautiful, spacious. None shall want, but all shall live as the true children of the Lord."

Small wonder that the stiff, restrained, fear-bred peasants and the anemic, tubercular, wizened mill slaves flocked to the Apostles, listening attentively, secretly enraptured by the visions of peace, joy, and plenty in Nauvoo. That all this splendour had the sanction of religion, that it could be enjoyed in the service of God Almighty, justified their interest. The mirage captured them and drew them into the long path that led across ocean and continent.

After a year's sojourn as assistant in Liverpool, Timothy Blackwell had been assigned to Crumlin, a village on the river Dee. Timothy had been amazingly successful among the factory groups in Liverpool, and his assignment to Crumlin, a new and important mining community, was by way of promotion.

This young Apostle had thrown himself into his missionary work with the complete absorption and utter sincerity that characterized every part of his life. He was born serious, intelligent, humourless. Had he been endowed with a risible faculty sensitive to the incongruous and ridiculous, he might never have deserted the orthodox Anglican Church to follow with fatal, unmitigated gravity the vagarious figments of Joe Smith's imagination. He had been converted to Mormonism by Sidney Rigdon's sermons, which he had read in a stray copy of the *Zion Star*. The shocked and disdainful remonstrances of his family had goaded him into a public espousal of Mormonism. Their continued disapproval had driven him into active proselytizing and finally into gathering his converts together and emigrating to Illinois. His frightened young wife, his small son, and his sister Alice were the only members of his immediate family to accompany him on the long journey from Montreal to Nauvoo. Alice, strongly like him, had defied family and tradition to follow the brother whom she loved to idolatry.

When Timothy's gentle wife died—her frail, delicate body transformed into ghostly emaciation—the husband had not cursed the new religion and fled as his sister Alice hoped he would. Instead, he threw himself into the legal work the Prophet pressed upon him. Working night and day, he had gone with little food or sleep, like a man possessed—a demon demanding more and more problems to solve. Only Alice understood this feverish, merciless absorption; she knew it was a defence against the shadow of sorrow hovering over him.

Timothy had accepted with alacrity the command to go to England. But even there, a year after he had lost her, the frail ghost of his wife haunted his days. He preached with a quivering zeal that stirred his hearers to a strangely sympathetic response.

One night, in the midst of a sermon, his eyes fell upon a young girl who was gazing up at him with a rapt yet burning look that startled him out of his train of thought. He floundered a bit, then paused to take a drink of water as he sought to answer the question pressing upon his mind, "What is it? Why do I feel so?" True, the girl was beautiful, arrestingly so, totally unlike the rest of the sturdy, stolid girls who flocked to hear his sermons. It was like the unexpected appearance of an exotic flower among garden plants. But that alone could not explain his confusion. He proceeded with the sermon, but ever aware of the young woman, who sat motionless, her hands quietly folded, her

shoulder pressing that of an older, feeble woman, whom Timothy judged to be the mother.

He concluded his sermon, called on Brother Williams to pray, and closed his eyes. In that moment there flashed before him full explanation of the unnerving effect of the girl's intent gaze. Another scene came back, fresh and burningly intoxicating in its vividness. It was ten years ago. He was twenty and had gone to a neighbouring village to address the church society on "New Testament Miracles." There in his audience, looking up at him raptly, he had first seen Audrey Drew. Their eyes had met and held. A year later Timothy and Audrey were married; a few years of happiness followed; now, in a crude box underground, she lay beside the Mississippi in a wild, uncivilized country. And he, here in Wales, was saving souls—seeing ghosts! No, this Welsh girl did not look like Audrey—only the eyes, the same dark, limpid, intently believing eyes.

Brother Williams finished the prayer.

"Amen!"

"Glory be to God!"

"Lead us on to Zion, O Lord!"

Timothy heard the echoes of the chorus from the audience as from far away. With difficulty he opened his eyes and dragged his thoughts back from that sad-sweet other world of his youth. Quietly, abruptly, he dismissed the congregation. Instead of going into the crowd to shake hands with the eager listeners, he remained on the platform, stubbornly averting his eyes from the girl's direction.

But she did not leave the hall; she approached the platform and stood near him as the crowds cleared. Brother Williams, recognizing her, beckoned to her and her mother to approach. Then in a loud, jovial voice, he introduced them: "Apostle Blackwell, meet the Widow Owen. And this is her daughter, Susa. It's their first meeting and they may want to talk with you."

Timothy took the mother's hand and looked into her thin, flushed face. With slow dread he turned, and taking the girl's hand, was unable to avoid her dark, pleading eyes. With relief he saw that, though they were rarely beautiful, they were not like Audrey's.

"Come and see us, Apostle Blackwell. We need your prayers. Please come." The girl's low voice, childlike, yet intensely urgent, moved him.

He promised, appointed a time for the next day, and watched the two women depart, the slender young girl protectingly upholding the mother. They seemed strangely alien in that crowd. Before going to his rude bed that night, the Apostle walked far out into the hills, for the first time giving himself up to memories.

He did not weep, but he sorrowed with the deep, serious brooding of his kind and returned exhausted, yet somehow refreshed by the lonely vigil in the black, mist-hung mountain country.

Timothy knew that the Lord had sent him to help the Owenses. He found the simple cottage at the edge of the village immaculate, but pitifully shabby. Here, since Mr. Owen's death in a mine several years before, had lived the mother and eighteen-year-old daughter. They had been alone, but tolerably happy until tuberculosis had laid its merciless finger upon Mrs. Owen. She had been an expert seamstress and had laboured earnestly to give her cherished daughter what education the village tutors afforded. It had been her hope that Susa should have a gentler life than hers, but with her illness that seemed now impossible. Susa was working far into the night to keep them both alive.

After the first call, Susa walked with Timothy to the garden gate. "Pray for her, Apostle Blackwell. Make her well and we shall be your faithful converts for ever."

The girl's implicit faith in his power left him uneasy. "I shall pray, but your mother is very ill, Susa."

"Yes, but doesn't your religion perform miracles? If faith is all that's needed, can't we save her?"

The girl's voice quivered as her eyes filled with tears. Timothy was moved, yet felt himself inadequate.

"We shall pray, but God's will be done, always."

As it was not God's will that Mrs. Owen be spared, Timothy made her last days blessed with content and joy in her timely conversion to the new Faith. His daily visits to the warm, loving cottage were the hours for which both women lived. He baptized them both and said over Mrs. Owen the rites for the dead, which brought the unconverted Mr. Owen safely by proxy into the Kingdom.

Came a summer night during which Mrs. Owen died. Timothy, knowing the time imminent, shortened his service and hurried through the narrow, crooked streets to the cottage. A single candle told him they were awake. He found Susa reading the Psalms to the wasted woman. He sat quietly beside the girl, and when she tired, he took up the reading, chanting the songs from memory. Once Mrs. Owen checked him to beg in her small, weak whisper, "You will look after Susa—be a friend to her—teach her to be a good woman?"

"I will."

He wanted to speak—to tell Mrs. Owen their secret. Timothy and Susa were in love. Both knew it, but neither by word nor gesture had Timothy injected this feeling into the rapidly narrowing margin of time left the daughter with her mother. That they knew was enough; it hung between them like a secret golden dream upon which they would open their eyes when Fate said

"Now." That he was near, supporting her with his strong presence, his beautiful prayers, his saintly comfort—that was enough. But now he felt he should speak. As his lips began to form the words, Mrs. Owen was seized with a sudden paroxysm and soon after died. Two days later they buried her in the small cemetery at the edge of the village.

When Susa knew her mother gone for ever, her courageous self-possession crumpled and she fell sobbing on the grave. Timothy lifted her, gently disengaging the fingers that desperately clutched the fresh earth. Half carrying her, he took her back to the cottage and led her to the rude bench in the midst of the tiny garden, where they had often sat and talked away the hours. It was a clear June night, full of stars and deep silence. Cradling her as though she were a child, he talked to her tenderly, comfortingly.

After a time, brokenly, the girl spoke the thoughts that had haunted her since she first feared her mother's doom. "Now I'm alone. . . . It was always just the two of us. I can't bear to think of her gone. Now there's nothing. . . ."

"Susa, look at me. You are not alone. Don't say that. Listen, beloved—" The girl's sobs shuddered away as she opened her eyes to look into his earnest face in the faint light. "Just two years ago I felt exactly as you feel to-night. I thought God had turned His face from me. There was no joy left, only work, work, work. . . . But now He has led me to you by strange, circuitous ways—through thousands of miles. He has set my path so that it came to you in your hour of need—in mine. The Lord brought us together to love and comfort each other. It is Divine Providence!"

When he kissed her soft lips, hot and swollen with sorrow, Timothy groaned; he felt the piercing beauty of her tragic despair and drew her close, holding her fiercely, defiantly, against all that hurt her—against the years of loneliness that had haunted him. Susa relaxed, felt comforted by the strength of Timothy's assurance. For a time she tried not to think, giving herself up to the delicate lassitude in which she hung poised, while Timothy's voice and arms caressed her. Then hot tears fell on her face and her arms went around him. There in the cool, midnight shadows they clung together, trembling with the sad-sweet passion of love so close to death.

The canny Prophet, not wishing to risk the loss of his foreign missionaries, forbade marriage of his Apostles while abroad. Timothy, however, hoped to secure a special dispensation and journeyed to Liverpool to present his case through the main office. Failing to obtain permission to wed, he begged to be returned to Nauvoo so that he might take Susa with him and

there make her his bride. But he was told that such a course could be decided upon only by the Prophet himself and that it behoved Brother Blackwell, the youngest of the Apostles, to be zealous in the Faith and not too concerned at this time with such a worldly matter as matrimony. Why not, it was suggested, send Susa ahead to Nauvoo? There would be plenty of Sisters to look after her. She could teach the younger children, grow strong and useful in the Faith, and soon, with proper orders, Timothy could follow.

The disappointed Apostle returned to Crumlin with the crushing news. Very soon the situation grew unbearable. Susa, alone in the cottage, was a continual source of desire to him. The girl's silent pleading to be near him whipped his taut nerves beyond endurance. They dared not be alone. Sadly, gravely, they decided that Susa must go ahead to America, there wait for him, and do all possible to hasten his recall. Timothy tried to console her with reasoning.

"You will live with Sister Alice. Perhaps the Prophet's wife will let you help her with my little boy. Get ready a home for us, my dearest. I shall reach Nauvoo by next spring surely, and the moment I arrive, we shall be married—my pretty bride—God-given."

"But the ocean between us—and America! Why, I've never even been to Liverpool!" Her eyes were wide with fright. "Will your sister like me, do you think?"

"She will love you at first because I do," he said simply, "then she will love you for yourself. Who could help it?" This last was spoken to himself as he marvelled at her fresh, young beauty.

"Must I see Prophet Joseph?"

"Of course. Go straight to him with our story. Tell him all. He will understand and help us."

"Is he then so kind and helpful even to a poor girl like myself?"

"He is the Prophet. He knows all and understands all. He can do no wrong. Trust him entirely if you would grow strong in the Faith, my child. The Prophet is the source of all our joy; but for him I should not have come here and I should not have found you."

Early in August Timothy shepherded a flock of two hundred converts from the Crumlin region to Liverpool, where they were to embark with three hundred other Mormons for America. Most of them carried all their wealth in hampers, rusty old valises, or oilcloth bags slung over their shoulders. Susa had sold her cottage. Her dowry—the linens of her mother's exquisite needle-work—and her few clothes went with her in a carved chest of dark oak—a chest dear to her mother.

"Don't ever part with this, my child," Mrs. Owen had once

said, while her hand stroked its black, gleaming surface. "I almost wish I could be buried in it," she had added half seriously.

Susa, remembering her mother's mysterious affection for the chest (it had been a gift to her from a rich London visitor to Crumlin years ago), found she could not part with it. So it went with her to Liverpool, and Timothy himself saw it safely aboard the sailing vessel.

At the very last Susa clung to Timothy, crying like a child. "I can't do it. I'm afraid—all these strange people—and the ocean looks terrible! We shall never get there, and if we do, how can I ever live in Nauvoo without you? I'm afraid something will happen! Oh, please, let me stay with you!"

Timothy was pale and grave. In that moment her eighteen years seemed so helpless—so far away from his mature thirty. Suddenly he felt a panic of terror. Was he doing right? He had promised her mother to take care of her. Yet here he was, sending her out alone to face terrors which often overcame strong men. Lifting her soft, lovely face in his hands, he scanned with an agony of questioning every minute detail—the broad, widely set eyes, faintly shadowed, so darkly blue they seemed black when she sorrowed; the straight nose with its sensitive nostrils; the generous lips, parted now, revealing white, even teeth; the firm, beautifully modelled chin, quivering with pain. Timothy memorized the face as his lips moved: "Dear God, go with her. Into Thy Kingdom I commit my bride."

Susa grew quiet. She closed her eyes to shut out the unbearable anguish of his feverish face. She felt his last kiss upon her lips. Then he was gone. . . .

Their boat, the *Good Hope*, battled storm and fog much of the way. Packed in like cattle, inadequately provisioned, they lived as if in a nightmare. Ten babies were born, six grown people died, almost everyone suffered chills and sea-sickness. For days they scarcely moved as the small boat lay helpless in a thick blanket of deathly fog. When the fog lifted, a terrific wind sped down from the North and lashed them mercilessly as it drove them out of their course. But brave-hearted, sustained in the faith of their new religion, they comforted each other through the ghastly terrors of the long voyage.

At New Orleans they rested and gave thanks unto the Lord for His protection. The leisurely, sheltered trip up the Mississippi was a triumphal voyage. They felt they had at last come into port, and they drank in eagerly the full measure of their safe, serene approach to Nauvoo.

Just sixty-two days after sailing from England, they sighted the fair city on the hill. What a contrast to the scene that had greeted Emma, the Prophet, and the refugees little more than two years before! Then theirs had been the only boat on the

The October sun, reflected on the rising stone walls of the Temple, on the Prophet's new Palace by the river, dazzled the eye with a white radiance. The city, spreading itself over the slopes and away to the prairie beyond, shone bright, clean, promising. People thronged the streets. Bands were playing. Men in bright uniforms rode about on horseback.

Silence fell over the emigrants. With weary, hopeful faces turned toward Nauvoo, they waited eagerly, impatiently, to set foot on the sacred soil—to walk into this city of joy and light.

They landed on October 4, 1841—a day memorable in Mormon annals as the occasion of a magnificent double ceremony: the laying of the corner-stone of the Temple and the dedication of the Prophet's Palace.

The confused and excited arrivals were greeted with military salute and martial music. Thinking the fanfare celebrated their arrival, they hurried up the hill in a state of childish delight. Susa, bewildered and wondering, yet filled with intense excitement, wandered alone among the crowds thronging the streets. Suddenly wild cheers resounded through the air. She was firmly pushed back into line just as a tall, handsome man, dressed in a bright red uniform ornamented with gold braid and epaulettes and accompanied by a large escort, rode by on a prancing black horse. He swept off his hat, and smiling, bowed low, first right, then left, in response to the cheers that greeted him. His long, auburn hair waved with graceful abandon about his bronzed, arresting face. He rode well, gallantly. Susa thought she had never seen so handsome a man.

“The Prophet!”

“Long live the Prophet!”

“God bless Prophet Joseph!”

The cries went up from the enthusiastic crowd.

As he passed regally, slowly, up the broad street, his keen eyes sweeping the uplifted, worshipping faces, his gaze fell upon Susa. Her plaid dress, her kerchief-covered head, the Paisley shawl, filled like a satchel and slung over her arm, disclosed her as one of the new arrivals. As Susa felt his eyes pause to rest momentarily upon her humble self, she lowered her head, while the blood crept up to the edge of her hair. She felt shame in her forwardness. Had she sinned in gazing so openly upon the great man? What had Timothy said of him? “He knows all, understands all.”

Thus Susa entered Nauvoo, and thus she looked upon the Prophet of Zion.

Chapter Forty

THE RHYTHM OF THE PROPHET'S CAREER THUS FAR MIGHT WELL BE compared with that of a great breaker insurgently pounding over reefs and shoals, each of its crests higher and more powerful than the preceding. The surge reached new heights in the triumphs of that October day marking the dedication of the Temple and the Palace. The arrival of Susa and her compatriots was a mere detail in the pyramided glories of that widely-heralded celebration. For days strangers—politicians, lawyers, writers, travellers, salesmen, preachers, farmers—had been pouring into Nauvoo by river and prairie trail, taxing the bursting city to its most hospitable capacity.

Nauvo, now boasting a population of twelve thousand, entertained three thousand guests this notable day—a day opening with the dawn salute of General Joe's artillery and closing with a banquet and ball for the special guests invited to the new limestone Palace on the river's edge. It was Joe's day, the consummation of all his vague, uncertain dreaming, in which the lust for Power and Glory had been the one permanent and unifying theme. Fifteen years of zigzagging over perilous uncertain shallows had transformed "Peeking Joe" into "Prophet-General." The ragged, indolent, illiterate boy who played pirate in the caves along Shady Creek, who could make warts disappear and charm witches into submission, who defied the scorn of righteously indignant Palmyra neighbours, little resembled, on the surface, the resplendent hero in the red and gold uniform.

But underneath they were much the same. Joe at twenty had wanted an audience to admire him, and the prettiest, smartest girl living in the finest house in the village for his wife. To-day Joseph, the Prophet of Zion, leader of a religion of twenty-five thousand, Mayor of the city of Nauvoo, President of the University of Nauvoo, General of the army of Mormon, wanted a bigger audience and more wives.

Fate had prospered Nauvoo, and the prosperity of the city had stimulated a nation-wide interest in western Illinois, resulting in the rise of towns and an accelerated business that brought this part of the state into general prominence. Although the steady flow of settlers was preponderantly Mormon, some "heathen"—of the Methodist, Baptist, and Campbellite persuasions largely—crept in and resisted conversion. Factories were running full blast—a pottery, a quarry, an implement works, a brick and lumber plant, a furniture manufactory—and were Mormon-owned. Additional ferries had been built. In a short time three steamboats plied the river, carrying Nauvoo's products to New Orleans, St. Louis and St. Paul, and bringing

in return spices, oils, salt, fruits, cotton goods, lumber and fine raiment for the exotically developing taste of the Prophet and his favourites.

Nauvoo, variously alluded to as "the heart of the prairies," "the centre of America," "the commerce queen of the Mississippi," "the metropolis of the Great West," "the New Jerusalem," was a name with which to conjure. Through the press, the pulpit, and political lobbies the nation was made increasingly aware of the magical Prophet of Zion. In the midst of a national depression, with business choked and commerce stagnant, the boy-wonder was building a flourishing city on the accommodating Mississippi. From every direction people came, drawn by the impulse to see, to learn, to profit. Many who came to scoff remained to study—to absorb what they could of wizard Joe's formula for success. During the last year the roads and river had carried a steady flow of visitors. More people called at Nauvoo in 1841 than at Chicago, St. Louis, or Washington.

To Joe this tidal wave of prospects created an emergency problem. By the summer of 1840 it had already become apparent that his simple frame house with its crude stone nogging was inadequate for his official needs. He began to figure on another residence, of palatial proportions, suitable for the requirements of a Prophet, which would adjoin the Temple.

But Emma rebelled.

"I suppose we must have a larger place, but I refuse to live in the shadow of your church."

She spoke with tired defiance. She would like to live on in the modest frame house on the flat high above the river, but she knew that to have any part in her husband's life, she must entertain his friends. Besides, her family was growing. She had Timothy Blackwell's little boy to look after; the Eicher twins, Sally and Gertrude, orphaned during the fever, lived with them, carrying on the house work; Judy was older and needed a room of her own; and then there were guests—always guests now—great and near-great. A chief justice, a rich London merchant, a New York writer, leading journalists, several Governors, had left their autographs in the guest book. Jacques Beauvais, the French artist whom Emma had charmed at Quincy, spent three months in the house in the autumn of 1840, doing handsome portraits of the Prophet and his wife. Thus they were always crowded, spilling over into neighbours' homes, into the summer kitchen, even sleeping part of the year in tents on the high terrace. Emma saw the necessity of a larger home, but was adamant regarding its location.

"But I thought you liked the Temple site? It's the highest point on the river. The view is grand. What's wrong with it?" Joe petulantly inquired.

"Many of your guests are not Mormons. Don't you think they would be more comfortable if further removed from the Temple? You can entertain with greater freedom—in more privacy."

She could not tell him that she wanted to get as far away from the Temple as possible, that she had found a quiet, lovely spot on the far slope of the hill out of sight of the mushroom city. She had grown canny in her disagreements with Joe. The form of her argument carried weight. Joe saw the advantages in separating church and state—privately at least.

"Well, have it your way. Choose the place, but it must be fit for a guest house—a Palace in Zion."

And so, there had arisen the thirty-five-room Palace of God. It stood near the river's edge on a beach-like shelf of land, curiously protected by the sweeping curve to the north. Facing the south, the battery of windows looked down upon the broad, glistening stream, which widened out into a lake as it wound around the rocky promontory. Behind the house a road led up to the city proper.

The U-shaped Palace, of creamy-bronzed limestone quarried from native rock, rose three stories and fronted the river for two hundred feet. Its narrow court enclosed a garden in which a fountain played. Fey, Rigdon, and Emma had worked on the plans prodigiously, with only superficial suggestions from the Prophet, who was absorbed in political and personal matters. It was a pleasant time for them all.

Rigdon, happier in his personal life since his wife and children, at his urging, had come out from Boston, worked sympathetically with Sister Emma and hid his instinctive dislike of Fey. Emma had been kind to Sidney's invalid wife, and between Emma and Rigdon's sprightly, intelligent daughter, Nancy, there had developed a deep, affectionate friendship. The ardent, lonely girl, languishing for the civilized life of her New England home, found in Sister Emma's warm, resolute, understanding the only congenial companionship Nauvoo afforded. Young David Rigdon, enamoured of Judy, haunted the Prophet's home, and the Ridgons dined frequently with them. Out of gratitude and for his family's sake, Sidney cloaked his critical attitude and a truce existed between him and Joe. The absorption of the work on the mansion facilitated the armistice.

Pierre's memories of French chateaux wove themselves deftly into the plans. The finished mansion in its simple design and gracious setting was a thing of authentic beauty. Emma, watching its deep walls and spacious lines mount and shape themselves before her observing eyes, lost herself in its firm, unostentatious beauty. She forgot her forebodings; her uncertain fears, her lonely midnight questionings; at last she was building

a home; it was deep-rooted, strong as the rock of ages, as rhythmical as the river's flow, whose waves washed close to its foundations. Something primal and possessive came to life in Emma's simple heart; a feeling grew, as though she said, "Here I shall remain. I shall not be dispossessed. This is my home, my life, come what may."

For the first time since she had left Harmony, she felt that she could take root—that she could find something permanent, enduring, in a world which thus far had taught her that existence is fleeting, momentary, fickle in its wayward and capricious treatment of its children. She found in this home qualities she somehow associated with the only other home she had ever known—the great stone house in Harmony—and in her heart she rejoiced that this was so. Perhaps here she could find some purpose, some justification, for her life.

All sensed this feeling in her. More and more, as work proceeded, Sidney and Pierre respected her most detailed wishes. The Prophet laughingly referred to "Sister Emma's playhouse." And when it was finished, she it was who received congratulations.

A son was born to Emma during the summer. With Aunt Martha's magical ministration she was back to work within a week. So beautifully slender and strong she was that Pierre's French gallantry caused him to exclaim, "*Madame* is a miracle! If her children are not immaculately conceived, surely they are immaculately born."

In July the Prophet and Emma boarded the *Maid of Orleans*, one of Nauvoo's steamers, and journeyed to St. Louis to select the furnishings for the Palace. They returned with red Brussels carpets, a few pieces of French furniture, Belgian lace curtains, and Chinese vases to add tone to the mansion's accoutrements.

But Emma liked best the old things of walnut and mahogany, which, despite hazardous roads and hurried flights, had stayed with her on her wanderings. Her grandmother's furniture, rubbed to mirror-like reflection, grew more beautiful, more precious daily. Mormon converts brought votive offerings of their most prized belongings—a Windsor chair, an old clock, a cherry chest. Would Sister Emma place them in God's Palace, in some place where the Prophet could enjoy them? She demurred; she knew what sacrifice these gifts represented, but she also understood the pride the giver took in having a proprietary interest in the Palace. She received the gifts lovingly and gave them precedence over the new things from St. Louis.

They moved into the mansion a few days before the dedicatory celebration. It was from its great double doors that the Prophet sallied forth in the early morning of that memorable day. Judge Stephen A. Douglas and Senator Whitlock,

honoured Democratic guests, here to see and be seen, walked beside him. Over rum and applejack the previous night they had reached an understanding. The Senator had stated it deftly, concisely :

“You stand by the Democrats, Prophet, and we’ll give you the men you want in this district.”

“It’s a bargain!” Joe, flushed with power and liquor, pounded the table. “I guess I can trust you. I’m tired of playing cat and mouse with these damned Whigs. Don’t mind telling you, Judge, that I don’t give a damn whether you’re Whig or Democrat so long as you give us what we want. You put Apostle Fey in the legislature, let him protect our interests, and we’ll elect your whole damn ticket, Governor and all!”

The following morning Joe and his guests, mounted on the finest horses from the Prophet’s stables, made a cursory tour of the city. From the ridge Joe pointed to the neat vineyards, growing in orderly shelves along the rocky slopes.

“Our French immigrants have done that. They prefer the rocky ground. Our wine crop this year ought to run ten thousand gallons. Damned good wine these Frenchmen make. Take a keg back with you, gentlemen.”

At the river landing Joe explained Nauvoo’s shipping business. He spoke of tonnage, cargoes, sailings, competition that made the men wonder.

“You mean you’ve built this up in two years?” the Judge questioned.

“Yes, and we’ll do four times this in another two. All we need is more converts and more time.”

The tour of inspection proceeded. Joe explained the drainage system he had developed to make Nauvoo the healthiest city along the Mississippi. He pointed to factories, schools, public buildings, co-operative farms for the city’s indigent, the hospital.

This last, “My wife’s idea,” he explained. “I don’t hold much with doctors, but a hospital’s a good place for the women and children, I suppose.”

And, finally, the Prophet paused before a half-built structure, set far back in a deep lot among golden maples. Joe spoke with an attempted casualness that poorly masked an inordinate pride: “This is the University of Nauvoo. We’re holding some classes there now in the central rooms, but we’ll have a first class institution here soon.”

“Ah—and the President and professors?” the Judge inquired.

“Oh, I’m President, naturally—matter of form. Brother Rigdon will teach religion, Brother Behr, history—he went to school in Germany once. We got a new man, Sayer, smart Canadian, who can teach most everything else. He graduated from some English school. I may give some lectures on Church

history myself." Joe was obviously partial to this last venture—his special brain child. His visitors murmured approval, while the Prophet added, "Yes, we aim to make Nauvoo feed the mind and intellect as well as the spirit and the body."

The last brought a quick, half-humorous sally from Douglas. "We hear a good deal about your Mormon ideas on the body, Brother Smith. I hope you won't neglect to include your harem in the tour."

Joe laughed loudly, a bit too boisterously perhaps, before he replied with stressed levity: "We Mormons have been accused of about everything, I guess, from baby-eating to witchcraft. But this polygamy talk is about the funniest sprung on us. One woman keeps me busy. Can't see why anyone would want to take on more than his duly prescribed amount of trouble, can you, Judge?"

The Judge checked his horse to watch a woman on horseback ride into the street just ahead. Following his gaze, his companions saw a young and pretty woman, dressed in a black velvet habit and saucy hat swirling in white plumes, riding toward them. The three men doffed their hats in response to her flash of greeting as she cantered past.

The Senator exclaimed, "By God, a woman like that stirs polygamous blood even in my old veins!" Then glancing keenly at Joe, he spoke confidentially, "Couldn't blame you, Prophet, for practising it even though you don't preach it. Who is the lady?"

"That's Sister Alice Blackwell—a Canadian convert."

Joe's voice was oddly restrained and he rode on in silence, a look of secret pride on his flushed face. He never ceased to be agitated by these chance encounters with his handmaidens. Sister Alice had been a difficult conquest—one in which he had delighted. A shock of pleasure ran through his tense body.

Turning their horses into the main street, they joined their escort and rode triumphantly up the broad road, acclaimed by the shouting multitudes. With his thoughts still on Alice the Prophet automatically swept off his hat and bowed to the throngs gazing up at him. Suddenly his gaze encountered a pair of startled, fathomless eyes looking at him out of a brown, oval face framed in a red shawl. Caught at first by their frankly wondering admiration, Joe's glance took in Susa's bright dress and the slender, graceful body it clothed, the peasant's bundle on her arm, the rough shoes. . . . The Liverpool boat is in, he thought, but I'll wager there aren't many like this one. He rode on, and Alice's disconcertingly appraising eyes were forgotten in that fleeting glimpse of Susa, awed and worshipping, her open face trustingly lifted to his golden magnificence.

At ten the Nauvoo Legion assembled in the parade grounds.

Its fourteen companies in full uniform passed in review before the General-Prophet, his staff, guard of honour, and distinguished guests. Then, led by Brigham Young, a young man converted at Kirtland and now President of the Twelve Apostles, and flanked with an honour escort of twelve ladies habited in black velvet and plumed hats, the Prophet began the ride to the Temple.

Amid a fanfare of martial music the procession climbed slowly to the bluff where the half-finished edifice rose imperiously into the sky. The fifteen thousand milling people packed into the streets and every available space—all bent on being in the thick of things—made orderly proceedings impossible. Only the dignitaries of Church and State could crowd themselves into the square, as the Prophet, in flaming red and gleaming gold, delivered the dedicatory address.

In the afternoon a sham battle successfully entertained the crowds, but even more successfully revealed the potential strength of the Mormon military forces. Springfield visitors—among them the Attorney-General—were given pause by the two thousand manœuvring legionaries, who seemed to have sprung full-fledged from the head of Joe.

In the grand-stand the grave-faced Attorney-General muttered his words venomously at Senator Whitlock: "So, Senator, this is what you hatched! You and your charter for Nauvoo! The General-Prophet, Joe Smith! God, Whitlock, do you see what you've done? This is no local unit of Illinois militia. That crazy preacher has an army, and a damned good one too!"

Whitlock gravely watched the orderly, efficiently drilled troops, the blazing Prophet in their midst, and replied fretfully, "That man's a born general. How in hell did I know it?" After a pause he added, "Better to have him for us than against us."

But the Attorney-General was not to be placated. "Harmless, religious fanatics you called them. Indeed! Well, I haven't seen much religion around here, but those are the best-drilled troops in the state. And we equipped them! This is your idea, Whitlock—for the sake of a few votes. Remember Aaron Burr!"

Whitlock held his peace, but he had something to ponder.

Chapter Forty-one

THAT EVENING THE PROPHET AND HIS WIFE STOOD IN THE GREAT south parlour of the Palace receiving their guests. Joe, flushed, animated, exuberant, showered hospitality upon the throngs that worked their way through the spacious room. Emma, whose stately dignity was accentuated by the austere richness of the velvet gown she had brought back from St. Louis, presided with an assurance and simplicity that deeply impressed the strangers among the guests.

“Beautiful, but a bit cold,” the Attorney-General observed.

“Fire under that ice, I’d say,” Senator Whitlock responded. “More damn pretty women in this place! Look around you and meditate; three years ago, nothing here but wilderness and marsh: now a town of twelve thousand, a grand army, a half a million dollar church, a Versailles palace, and a mob of pretty women dressed like a queen’s attendants. How do you explain the miracle?”

“I can’t,” the Attorney-General replied moodily. “It isn’t natural or healthy. It’s a mirage—can’t last. Look at the Prophet there—the creator of all this. He looks earthy enough, but there’s something unreal, shadowy, about him. He’s a mirage too. Did you ever see such eyes—shifty, shrewd. I don’t like him and I don’t trust him!” He finished vehemently, turning to a window to look out upon the river.

The Senator continued to watch the Prophet for a moment, then shrugged his shoulders and joined the crowds wandering through the mansion.

More than three hundred guests sat down to a banquet which had been days in the making. Every large Nauvoo kitchen and every prominent Mormon Sister had shared in its preparation. Tables were set up in all of the first floor rooms, and when guests had been seated with punctilious recognition of precedence, Mormon maidens, directed by the busily efficient Judy, served the epochal dinner—roast plover, turkey, goose, partridge, quail, chicken. . . . Native wines, Canadian rum and applejack punctuated the toasts honouring the important personages present.

In the midst of the dinner one of the Apostles rapped loudly on the table. With some difficulty he gained the attention of the noisy diners, gorging themselves with savage relish, and in a loud, pompous voice recited the well-memorized toast previously prepared under the direction of the Prophet himself:

“Resolved, ladies and gentlemen, that Prophet-General Joseph Smith—whether we see him in the rôle of divinely-inspired servant of the Lord, leading the Chosen to Nauvoo, or

as the flashing, courageous General of his gallant troops, or as the wise Mayor of our illustrious city, or as the king of hosts in his own hospitable Palace—resolve, I repeat, that he has few equals and assuredly no superiors! Brothers, sisters, honoured guests, I pledge you—the Prophet!"

The response came in loud salvos and cheers, washed down with gallons of potent wines and liquors.

After the banquet more guests arrived. The Apostles and their wives stood beside Joe and Emma to receive the ever-lengthening stream of Mormons who came to congratulate the Prophet on this his day of triumph, to participate in the great house-warming, to gaze upon the famous guests, to display their best clothes while frankly examining those of their neighbours.

Because of his wife's serious illness, Sidney Rigdon was not present. Nancy had brought regrets and Joe insisted that she stand beside him as proxy for her father. For an hour he kept the shy, low-voiced girl near him: he liked to place his hand closely over her bare arm as he introduced the guests.

"Colonel Davis, this is Apostle Rigdon's proxy and my first lieutenant, Nancy Rigdon. The proxy's better than the original—what do you think, Colonel?"

They laughed loudly over the Prophet's little joke. As the young girl gravely greeted the Colonel, Joe watched the blood mount delicately up from the bared shoulders of the decolletage. When Nancy nervously extricated her arm from his grasp, Joe was deceived by her flower-like beauty, her fragile, innocent youthfulness, into believing her "just another pretty, bashful girl." Emma could have told him that beneath that gentle loveliness lay the will and intellect of Sidney Rigdon, but for the present Joe was content to tease Apostle Sidney's little girl, to touch her arm, to pay her gallant compliments, to watch her blush embarrassedly.

Following the reception there was dancing in the great rooms and on the lawn. The Prophet strolled from group to group, intoxicated with rum and glory. He lost his prophetic dignity at times, lapsing into the gamin vagabond, the story-telling braggart of Palmyra days. But Emma's watchful eyes followed him: several times she came near, smiling quietly, ostensibly to ask some trivial question, but her firm hand on his arm, one long warning look from her steady eyes, sobered him.

Emma was patient, lenient, with Joe this night. Was it not a notable day for them both? Unexpectedly encountering her reflection in a pier glass, she caught her breath: she was lovely! The trailing red velvet gown made her taller, even regal: the low lines of her bodice exposed her well-moulded shoulders and slender, strong neck. She was glad she was attractive.

Touched by the homage, the genuine love, which Joe's followers gave her, she felt a curious humble gratitude. As a religious asset, as a church proselytizer, she knew she had failed Joe. But she loved these people! She had found her part in the great drama in that—in helping and comforting them in their tribulations and sufferings. Her heart warmed, an added softness came into her calm face, her voice took on richer tones.

Meeting Dr. Starr, who hovered near, taciturn, as darkly handsome as ever, she begged impulsively, "Come, Doctor, smile! This is our great day. Surely the plagues are past. You may be out of a job, but be happy to-night—for my sake!"

"All right, I will for your sake, Sister Emma." His sombre eyes flashed brilliantly, then darkened again as he added, "You are the most beautiful creature in the world. Almost you make me believe in God."

"You mustn't say such things," she said gently, but without reproof, as she turned to Pierre Fey, brilliant and dashing in the full-dress uniform of the second ranking officer of the Nauvoo Legion.

"Shall we dance on the lawn, *madame*?" Pierre "sistered" all the Nauvoo women save Emma. For her he used, with a sort of playful exaggeration, all the French gallantry he was born to. Swift, agile, suave, Pierre never fumbled. Emma did not trust him, but his graceful, subtle admiration pleased her.

"*Madame* is *très belle* to-night: *madame* is a triumph! For me the triumph of her *esprit* will outlive that of her distinguished husband."

Emma smiled—what nonsense! But agreeable nevertheless. On coming out of doors, she felt buoyant, ineffably happy. Her spirit drank in the beauty of the night. The music, the flaring torches, the gay, laughing people touched her lightly. As she passed through the pattern of the dance, her spirit floated away over the silent waters which seemed to flow out from the very foundations of her home. Smiling at her partner, she drifted far, far down the shimmering, moon-lit path that crossed the bosom of the quietly moving river. . . .

Just as the music stopped, there came from the near-by grove a woman's outraged cry. The people saw Annette Sayer, the young wife of Donald Sayer, rush indignantly from the shadows and into the house. After her came the Prophet, flushed and protesting. When he took in the situation—a crowd of people dumbfounded with amazement—he called out with affected humour, "Sister Annette was frightened—a cow moving in the bushes!"

An embarrassed laughter eased the awkwardness of the situation. Emma went to Joe, took his hand, gave a command to the orchestra, and under cover of the music spoke to him;

"Come, Joe! Remember who you are. Let us lead this minuet and show them how it can be done!"

People came from the house to watch them—the Prophet dancing with Sister Emma. Surrounded by murmurs of admiration, they faced each other. Emma's proud head was high, but the softness had disappeared from her expression. Joe, again the showman playing to an adoring audience, stepped gracefully, and bowed with a flourish. He was not as accomplished in this rôle as in that of the General, but the Prophet should do all things well. Before the dance was finished he had forgotten his recent rebuff. . . .

The long day ended at midnight. The last of the Mormons were on their way up the hill, the house guests had taken their lighted candles from Judy's hands, spoken their good nights, and climbed the great walnut staircase to their shadowy rooms. . . . Alone, husband and wife again faced each other. Emma was tense and tired: Joe, suddenly ashamed, awkwardly tried to explain. "It's been a great day, Emma——"

A little silence.

"I'm sorry about that last—about Annette——" Emma remained silent. He stumbled on: "Darned fool woman—afraid of a cow . . . screaming out like that—why, folks might think——"

"Oh, don't—please don't, Joe!"

Emma's voice came in agonized entreaty. She looked up at him and saw, not the General, not the Prophet, but the awkward, lying, greedy, spoiled child—grasping, grasping—stumbling, irresponsible, fumbling—getting into trouble just when he should be cautious. What was the use? She could not change him. All she could do was to stand by—to help him as she had to-night and before. No use to scold, to reason—he would lie. But he was looking at her so helplessly. He was deflated, punctured, and he had been so proud of himself all day! On a wave of compassion, she kissed him.

"Never mind, Joe, you are tired. Go to bed."

"Emma——" He had her in his arms. "Emma, you are beautiful. I heard what everyone said to-night. There wasn't a woman here who could hold a candle to you." His arms tightened. She felt his flushed face bend over her bare shoulder in the old familiar way. His voice grew husky with passion. "Emma, come. Let us go upstairs—now."

In spite of all she knew about him, Emma felt her blood growing hot in her veins, her will slipping, her flesh tingling. But something at the inner core of her being refused to yield to-night. Her flesh cried out to him—drunk, lustful, though he was—but her spirit would not surrender.

"Not now, Joe. We are tired, dreadfully tired. Go on to bed and to sleep. I'm not coming now."

He turned from her sulkily, and a bit unsteadily went into the hall. Emma blew out the last candle and stood alone in the darkened room, now so restfully silent where an hour ago there had been agitation, confusion. She went to the window and leaned out into the sweet coolness of the autumn night. The wan- ing moon, dull red, was now well into the sky and cast a path of crinkled gold far down the river. The slow, steady pulling sound of the main current and the gentle lapping of the little waves near the shore were the only sounds that came to her. These soothed, rested her, and the ache in her heart and head subsided. Long she stayed, leaning on the wide ledge of the window.

She must have fallen asleep. When she came to consciousness with a start, the moon had passed the meridian and she was cold. Slipping ever so quietly down the long corridor on her way to her room, she was startled by the sound of a sob. She was just outside Judy's door. Terrified, she waited. Surely she had imagined it . . . silence in the sleeping house . . . then again, unmistakably, the pitifully painful, long-breathed sob. Emma tried the door. It was locked.

"Judy! Open the door—Judy!" Complete silence answered her. "Judy, please open the door. It's Sister Emma!"

After a moment the door opened and the young girl flung herself into Emma's arms, weeping hysterically. Emma felt the girl's heart pounding desperately like an imprisoned thing struggling for freedom.

"What is it, Judy? You must tell me. Don't be afraid. Nothing can harm you now!"

But Emma knew. Even as she asked the question she knew. She should have come upstairs with Joe! She should have known that look, that sulky, greedy, grasping look. He was drunk—She hadn't thought at all. Judy! Merciful God—little Judy, her daughter, she seemed! But she must know absolutely. Slowly, tenderly, gently, she drew from the terrified girl the ugly story.

Joe, coming up the stairs, had encountered the child in the hall, dressed for bed. She was on her way to the linen room for a blanket. She said good night and tried to pass him, but he followed her into the room, "my own new room, the first I've ever had to myself," she sobbed.

"I fought and scratched his face till it was all bleeding, but I didn't scream, Sister Emma, on account of you! I thought he'd go away. Before, he never did anything so dreadful!" Haltingly, incoherently, the phrases were jerked from her pathetically quivering body. "Oh! Sister Emma—if only you hadn't found out! I'd kill him if you would let me!"

The deep venom in this last stabbed Emma. Suddenly cold fury flowed over her. She got to her feet. "I'll be back, Judy. I'll be back soon and sleep with you to-night." Her voice

sounded strange to her, as if she were speaking to herself from far away.

Swiftly Emma went to the south room, the huge front room, whose windows rested on a straight line with the river. How lovingly, how hopefully, she had watched this room grow! With trembling fingers she lighted a candle. Her brain whirled—deep fury, feverish anger, deep loathing. “I’d kill him if you would let me!” Judy! Emma crossed the room to her husband’s bed, intent on saying the things that struggled through her mind.

Joe was asleep, sunk deep—a thousand miles deep—in the oblivion of a drunken sleep. Lying on his side, his knees drawn up, his head cupped in one hand, three gouged, red lines across his cheek, his long, auburn hair curled casually over his forehead, his soft, sensual lips parted, his breathing—the audible heavy breathing of exhaustion—he slept like a child.

Standing over him, the lighted candle held close to his face for the second time that evening, Emma felt another abrupt change sweep over her. A tidal wave of compassion drenched her, shocking her into intimate awareness of inevitable things—things not to be explained, though clearly understood. When the wave receded, she was limp and trembling, drained of all feeling save a brooding, fearful pity. Wake him? What good would it do? Scold scornfully? Threaten? What would she threaten? She was free to take her children and Judy, leave Nauvoo and this creature to-morrow. She knew well she would not. No, she must find another way.

Emma tossed the covering of her own bed to give it a slept-in appearance and went back to Judy. The child, completely exhausted, lay against her shoulder like a sick bird. Emma’s tired brain began work on a new problem.

“How old are you now, Judy?”

“Sixteen last June, Sister Emma.”

“You like Dave Rigdon, don’t you, Judy?”

“Yes . . .” Uttered shyly, sadly, the little word said much.

So . . . It would be that way, Emma thought. She would see Sidney to-morrow—tell him the truth—it was the only way. With a deep sigh Emma turned towards sleep. . . .

Chapter Forty-two

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING EMMA WENT DIRECTLY TO SIDNEY Rigdon's home. Nancy met her at the door, but something in the older woman's face checked the questions that sprang to the girl's lips.

"May I see your father alone for a little while, Nancy?"

"Yes, certainly, certainly, Sister Emma. Go into the parlour. He's with mother now, but I'll fetch him right away."

"Nancy—I'd rather your mother didn't know I am here. Need we disturb her?"

"No, no, Sister Emma. I shall arrange it," the girl assured her as she darted away.

While she waited in the neat front room which served also as Apostle Rigdon's study, Emma's mind flew back over the years to another grave interview with Sidney Rigdon. Then he had sought her out on her lonely walk across a New York hillside. Then he had appealed to her to take Joe back into her heart—to work with them all for the Power and Glory of Zion. The scene came back like a clear, vivid picture, subtle in nuances. She had been influenced that day by Brother Sidney's pleading. She had taken Joe back, had come with them, all the way, to do her part in the building of the Empire.

To-day the situation was curiously reversed. She was seeking out Sidney Rigdon to ask of him a great favour. Would he remember that other time? The years had made great changes in them both. Through all their vicissitudes and triumphs there had been no recurrence of that intimacy of mind that had marked their morning talk there near the old Smith shack but a short while before Joe's flight to the West.

There had been brief moments when Emma had caught glimpses of the other man—the real man she sensed in Sidney Rigdon, a man quite unlike the nervous, fanatical preacher whose ambition for fame and glory would not yield to Joe's unscrupulous, irresponsible devices. There was the night she had heard Sidney denounce Joe for Sister Felicity's sake. There was that moment when she had felt his lips upon her hand, a hand damp with the agony of birth pains, and had seen in his eyes a pitying, reverential adoration. There were innumerable times through these crazy years when her spirit had been lifted by flashes which intimated Apostle Sidney's integrity, his fanatical purity, his differentness from the man who controlled and dominated his life. Yes, he was very unlike the Prophet!

Emma had ceased to wonder why Brother Rigdon remained with the Mormons. Intuition told her that the Golden Plates, the Revelations, and Miracles were not mysteries to Sidney.

She felt that he knew more in his perceptive grasp of human beings and life itself than the Prophet would ever know. But wonderment at his presence in Nauvoo came back as her eyes scanned the titles of the leather-bound books on the shelves lining one side of the room, books which Sister Rigdon had brought from their Boston home—Plato, Marcus Aurelius, a book, there in one corner, entitled *The Everlasting Mercy*. This last Emma had seen before and recalled it now as the Bible of a thirteenth-century monk named Cyril, who claimed to have received it, engraved on copper plates, from the Angel of the Lord. How strangely like the story of their own Golden Plates this was. . . .

On the walls hung pictures of crumbling structures—the Parthenon, the Forum, the Arch of Titus. No other Nauvoo parlour knew such pictures. Emma sensed a beauty in the permanence of these bleak ruins that vaguely corresponded with Apostle Sidney's inner self. It linked up with his austere, tender devotion to a suffering, invalid wife, with his scrupulous guardianship of his children, with his unspoken deference to her, the Prophet's wife. It was to this man, the hidden other man, to whom Emma knew she must now appeal. Casually she picked up the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius and turned the pages. Her eye caught the pencilled lines along the margin of a paragraph, and she paused to read.

Often think of the rapidity with which things pass by and disappear, both the things which are and the things which are produced. For substance is like a river in a continual flow, and the activities of things are in constant change, and the causes work in infinite varieties; and there is hardly anything which stands still. And consider this which is close to thee, this boundless abyss of the past and of the future in which all things disappear. How then is he not a fool who is puffed up with such things or plagued about them or makes himself miserable? for they vex him only for a time, and a short time.

“For substance is like a river in a continual flow——” Was this perhaps the explanation of her own life and her love for the Mississippi? She gazed out of the window, down the terraced slope, to the broad, sweeping curve of the river below, and mused.

Sidney's nervous step interrupted her reverie. As she turned to look at him, she was struck with the change the troubled years had wrought in him. Although his thin, upright figure retained its proud carriage and his aristocratic face its haughty distinctness, still the man had aged greatly. He looked ill, harassed, almost broken. His cultivated voice began with the air of faint ceremony characteristic of him.

"Good morning, Sister Emma. I was grieved to be absent from your fine party past evening, but—" At sight of her face he broke off, "What is it? You are troubled. Tell me!"

The quick sympathy of his voice and manner decided her. She asked simply, "Brother Rigdon, would you consent to your son's marriage to Judy—at once?"

"Sister Emma, they are children—but why?"

"No, wait—that is not all I ask. I want them to marry and go away from here—to cut themselves off from Nauvoo, from us!" Her voice, tense, low, was controlled with great effort.

As she paused, Sidney asked, "Hadn't you better tell me exactly what has happened?"

Emma told him simply, in a voice devoid of emotion, things that sounded strange coming from her lips. She gave him only enough of the story of her life with Joe to make clear her point—that Judy must not remain in Nauvoo. There was no denunciation, no reproach of anyone. She spoke as a doctor might recount a patient's symptoms, ending, "Judy must go. I promised Jimmy Ordery when he was dying that I would care for his sister. I believe Judy and your boy will be happy together."

"But David is only nineteen. How old is Judy?"

"Sixteen, but isn't marriage better than other things?"

The man groaned: "Yes, yes! What do you want them to do? Where will they go? I have so little money left."

His tone promised compliance. Emma spoke quickly: "I have money—plenty. I have touched none of the money my mother left me. Joe doesn't know of its existence." She paused. "Judge Frank Fetter now lives in Springfield. You perhaps know him?"

"Yes—a fine man. But he's no friend of the Mormons," Sidney said grimly.

"No," Emma smiled sardonically, "I know that well, but he is an old friend of my father—of mine. David wants to read law. He has talked to me of it often. If you will help us, I shall take the children to Judge Fetter and place David in his office. I have every reason to believe he will receive them and give David every chance."

"But to turn our children over to the enemy—to an avowed anti-Mormon! Sister Emma, do you know what that means?"

"I think it means a better chance for our children. Do you want them to face what you have faced? Are you so convinced that our religion is the only way to heaven?"

Sidney's face was grey as he answered, "God help me, but my answer is no, no, no! If you only knew how these questions haunt me, but I see no honourable way out—for me or for my family. Still, don't you know that if we do this—secretly

marry our children and send them to the protection of our enemy—that we shall incur Brother Joseph's wrath?"

Emma's face became set, almost defiant. "Brother Joseph's wrath I can manage. I know it's harder for you, but we must not let our children suffer for our mistakes." . . .

There was silence for a space. Both were thinking of that other morning in the autumn sunshine. Finally he turned to her, a face unmasked, tragic in its haunted sorrow.

"When I asked you to come with us, I believed in our mission. I thought then that we could build an empire for the Lord. I know now that the Lord was only an excuse." He shook off his evil mood with a despairing sigh. "Do as you think best for the children. If my son is willing—and I'm sure he is, for my children have had little joy here—I shall console my wife. That will be the most difficult part, but I shall stand with you. When do you wish to go?"

"At once—to-night, I don't want little Judy to endure another night in the house. Could you marry them here at noon?"

Sidney was trembling and white. "Not even a Temple service? Sister Emma, you ask a great deal. I have no authority to marry outside the Temple."

Softly the woman pleaded: "Long before you knew Joe Smith, you were a minister of God. Marry David and Judy with the service you used then. It would seem more sacred to me, Brother Rigdon." Sidney looked at her with sorrowing eyes, and Emma added, "Or, if you prefer not to, we can have a service read in Springfield."

Sidney straightened abruptly. "No, it shall be as you wish—entirely. Shall we call David?"

"Could you, would you mind telling him—alone? Please tell him the truth about last night. I'll visit with Nancy."

It was not long until David came to her. His young face seemed suddenly mature, but his eyes filled with tears as he said, "Father has told me. I am ready, Sister Emma. Tell Judy I'm glad we're to be married and leave this place."

At noon in Rigdon's front room Judy Ordery and David Rigdon stood with clasped hands before Apostle Sidney. Emma and Nancy were beside them. The mother, fatally ill in the next room, was surprisingly calm: she was glad one of her children was to escape Nauvoo and the religion she had never accepted. As the words of the old familiar service fell from Sidney's lips, a strangely happy light came over his face, washing it clean of the closed, worried look it wore as the Mormon Apostle. It was the service which had united him twenty years before to the frail woman who had borne him two children. Emma closed her eyes to keep back the tears, while there surged

through her deep, stirring memories connected with the church, the religion, the God of her childhood. She felt again the emotions that filled her on that winter evening she had slipped into the church in Quincy. Again God became near and real, sacred and blessed. "Dear God, bless and keep them well, strong, happy," she prayed as Sidney Rigdon repeated the last questions in a voice beautiful with holy sincerity.

An hour after the ceremony Emma and the two children left in the "four wheeler" for Springfield. In two days they drove up to the Sangamon Hotel. That night, as Judy and David slept the innocent sleep of youthful exhaustion, Emma, tired to aching, lay wideawake, trying to formulate a plan for the morrow.

But when the moment came and she stood facing the distinguished man, all her nocturnal plans were forgotten. Frank looked at her with incredulous eyes that lighted with welcome as he took her hand.

"Emma Hale! Emma, Emma . . ." he repeated over and over. "You stay strangely the same. *I am* glad to see you!"

He seated her in the imposing leather chair across from his own at the heavy walnut table. They talked for an hour—of Harmony, of Mrs. Hale's death, of the loss of Emma's children, of her father's fine character, of the great West of which they were a part, of its growth, of the migrations, of the pain and joy of pioneering. Always they steered clear of the things nearest their hearts. But their eyes said much. Finally—

"You have grown handsome, Emma. Your troubles have strengthened you, made you more wonderful." It was said with a detached sort of tenderness that made her reply simply:

"And you, Frank—success has not spoiled you at all. You are just what father said you were, 'one of God's finest,' and I am glad, proud of you."

In the long pause following, Emma's eyes were the first to fall. Then she spoke in another manner: "You must wonder why I am here. Do you remember your words—your promise to me—in our kitchen that morning?" Emma's voice was light, but she skinned that dangerous corner by adding quickly, "I've come to claim your help. I have a very great need of your friendship now."

Emma told her story without directly implicating her husband. Would Frank be willing to take David Rigdon into his office—keep an eye on the young people? "I have money for them. It isn't that kind of help they need, Frank. But they are young, and I shall rest freer if I know you are interested in them. Do you mind?"

"Thank you, Emma." Frank's voice was unsteady. "Far from minding, I shall be glad. I shall bring the boy David in

here. It will be a pleasure to a lonely, busy man to have a young pair to fuss over."

When all the arrangements were concluded, Frank said slowly, "This thing that has happened to-day—your being here—is the most blessed thing that has ever come to me. I cannot tell you what—how much—it means. I only wish that you were asking a still greater favour."

She did not pretend to misunderstand him, but shook her head. As they clasped hands in parting, she said, "That I shall never do. As I look at you to-day, I wonder at some things I have done. But they are final. There has never been any possibility of turning back."

"And no regrets?" He was sorry, but he had to ask it.

"Perhaps—for moments. But there has been little time for regret."

When Joe discovered that Emma had left Nauvoo, his first rage quickly gave way to terror. There was not even a note for him, but she had left word with the servants that she would be gone for several days. When he found that Judy had gone with her, shame and an awful foreboding subdued him. He felt sure Emma would return, but was at a loss to understand this unprecedented move. Pride forbade too close a questioning of the servants. His recollection of the events of the preceding night, of his struggle with the little "cat," Judy, were vague and confused. Best forget as much as possible, he decided. Through the days of Emma's absence he assiduously pursued his prophetic duties and whipped his injured husband's dignity into a fever of resentment against his wife.

Returning at midnight to the Palace several days later, he made his way to the large south bedroom which he and Emma shared. Inside the room he stopped in amazement. It had undergone a complete transformation since he had left it early that morning. All of Emma's things had been removed—even the mahogany bedroom set by which she had set so much store and in which Joe had come to feel a proprietary pride. The room was now furnished with some of the manufactured furniture bought in St. Louis—the kind used in their guest rooms. In confusion Joe opened the closet to find all of his wife's garments gone. Only his were there—in perfect order. On the dresser were carefully laid his shaving articles and personal things, but on the accompanying chest there were no feminine knick-knacks. The space was blank save for a fresh copy of the *Book of Mormon*.

Slowly the meaning of all this dawned upon him. . . . Then she must be home. In anger he went into the hall, traversed it, opened each door, and, holding the fitful candle high, peered into the darkness, searching for his wife.

At Judy's door he hesitated, but with a flush of rising wrath he turned the knob. It was locked! So that was the way she would punish him! Hiding in there with the girl! He pounded on the door furiously. He would show her who was master in this house. With renewed fury he attacked the door, but when it opened his anger was checked. Emma stood there, tall and composed, but her eyes were burning with a livid fire new to them.

"What do you mean by coming down here—by leaving your own room?" he blustered defiantly.

"I wish to be alone."

"Alone—with Judy?" His voice was contemptuous.

"Judy is not here." Her cool, noncommittal tone irritated him.

"Look here, Emma. What's all this mean?" He started to push his way past her into the room, but she barred the way.

"If you come into this room, I go out of it—and out of this house—to stay." He stared at her stupidly. Here was a New Emma, one who spoke a strange tongue—but he knew that she meant what she said. He backed away foolishly as she added, "Go to your own room. I'll come there to talk to you."

A few minutes later Emma, wrapped about in a white wool robe that covered her body like a nun's habit, sat in the broad deep window of her husband's bedroom. The tall candles on the dresser made weird shadows on the walls and touched their faces into an odd play of grotesque forms. Through the open window came the faint nostalgic scents of October, the acrid smell of smoke from burning leaves, the drying of the sun-drenched earth. As Emma spoke, the consciousness of the river's eternal flow there below her, so near, entered into her feeling and checked the stored-up bitterness she had thought to give her words. She told him that Judy and David were married and living in a distant city—cut off from Nauvoo. He was not to question where. "I take all responsibility. Brother Sidney complied only to help us out of a terrible situation."

When Joe blusteringly tried to excuse himself by denouncing Judy as an impudent, ungrateful liar. Emma interrupted him with weary patience: "And suppose there were no evil consequences?" He said nothing. "I have known for years that you were not faithful to me—to the vows we made. There have been dozens of others—" When he would have stopped her, she said sternly, "Don't lie to-night. It's no use. I'm tired of the pretence, tired of quieting my conscience. I married you, and to me that meant for life. I believed the words I spoke when I promised to cleave only unto you, in sickness and in health, until death do us part. Those words were a sacred promise,

and through the years I've remembered them each time I've come back to you—after you tired of other women."

To the man now dumb and ashamed, Emma had never seemed so beautiful. In one of his rare moods—a rush of the small boy's impulsiveness—he came to her in awed sincerity. "Emma, there has never been anyone but you—really. All the other is put on. It comes and goes—I don't know why, but I can't seem to help it. As sure as there's a God in heaven, you are the only woman. I—" he stopped, floundered, ashamed of the words in this hour, "the only real woman in my life," he finished awkwardly.

But when he would have embraced her, Emma drew back, her hurt eyes upon his sensuous, weak, handsome face. "I believe that, Joe. That is why I could always come back to you after the pain and humiliation of the other. But after Judy—even that is not enough. No, it's finished. There are two courses open. I'll take our children and go away—if you wish. Or, I'll stay and we shall live apart—I live my life, you live yours. Which shall it be?" Her tone was strained, but not ungentle. She had risen—the interview must end.

"Stay," he pleaded quickly. "Don't go away." At the hint of her going, a thousand terrors leaped out upon him. He forgot somewhat his own personal aggrievement in the face of the endless complications his wife's desertion just now would entail. "Stay, I'll promise not to bother you."

"Good night, Joe."

She left him without a backward glance, and he fell to sleep devising schemes to secure her return.

Chapter Forty-three

FINDING HIS *AFFAIRES DU CŒUR* INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO finesse, Joe had given deep thought to the problem of simplifying the complexities of his polygamous responsibilities. It was obvious that legitimization was inevitable. That called for a Revelation. But how? When? How far could he go? These were grave questions, demanding delicate handling.

Although Joe's ego was stupendous and his faith in himself infinite, Missouri had taught him that he was not impregnable. He had played long with the idea of instituting plural marriage as a tenet of Mormon doctrine, but he proceeded with caution lest he endanger the material success of Nauvoo's economic and political position. The philosophy of his preaching had of late taken on a strong pragmatic colouring. Zion's tangible assets, bigger and better, sounded the keynote to most of his sermons. He harped less on Revelation, mystic messages and miracles, but he waxed eloquent on God's land stakes, the Temple's gold and silver, and the financial needs of a growing empire. And while he preached the new American virtues of "go and take," his mind continuously toyed with the idea of a new system of ethics—a complete revolution in the annoying and stupid restraints that social customs placed upon him.

In the beginning this thought had come idly, as a sort of hazy dream spun around his sensual indulgences with the pretty recruits, who too often fell easy victims to his "holy appetites." Coming from a hastily consummated rendezvous in some secret, uncomfortable room, his wilful, luxury-loving nature prompted the vision of another, easier, less undignified manner of conducting his affairs. At first he pondered a Revelation restricting to himself these special privileges—a magnified version of the feudal landlord's first night claims upon his peasant women. But Joe was shrewd enough to recognize the envious rebellion such an exclusive prerogative would engender. So his curiously devious mind secretly devised scheme after scheme for a restricted polygamy which would carry holy sanction; all of these schemes he had been forced to reject for their lack of any religious appeal to the devout Mormons.

Until he came to Nauvoo he had been handicapped by the knowledge that his leading Apostles, the men whose ability he needed for the perpetration of such a cataclysmic change, would denounce him as a madman. Even now he knew that his finest talent—Rigdon, Behr, Blackwell, Sayer, Armstrong—was to be found in men to whom such a doctrine would be repulsive. This was obvious in a number of ways, particularly from the private lives of these men—lives in every way exem-

plary. On the other hand, Tunk, Hurlbutt, Piatt and the Prophet's brother, Hyram—Apostles likely to entertain such a doctrine—were weak and insignificant as leaders, quite useless for purposes of persuasion.

The Prophet had not lived in Nauvoo a year before Pierre Fey had become his willing confidant in this matter. Pierre proved extremely useful. Joe again had occasion to marvel at the book wisdom of this Frenchman, from whose dark and secret past new tricks were constantly conjured. Fey, after reciting numerous historical instances of the successful use of the polygamous system, concluded :

“But why go so far afield? The *Old Testament* is all you need. The Hebrews practised plural marriages with God's blessing; Solomon's wives were no curse to him—nor Abraham's. You don't have to go outside your own *Book of Mormon* for support. Weren't your Golden Plates written in an ancient language? Haven't you your Egyptian mummies to give further evidence to your argument? Aren't you a divine interpreter of religious history? Is there any reason you can't have a Revelation straight from the Lord restituting the polygamy of the old Patriarchs?”

The irony in the suave tones of the Frenchman escaped Joe. “Well, you write all that down. Comb the Bible—all the books you know that endorse the system. Let's get the material together, study it, then we can spring it on 'em—good or bad.”

Pierre studied Joe's sensually handsome face, his shifty, greenish-blue eyes, and asked wonderingly, “But why do you want to take on such a burden? It will mean warfare. You have all the women you want. You manage well—why let others in on it?”

“I want to change things! I want to make everything I do right—right because I do it! Then, too, we must build up the Kingdom; we need children—lots of them!”

“Oh yes—the Prophet again. I see, but I'm warning you it would be safer if you kept your system secret and exclusive.”

With the great influx of women through 1840 and 1841, Joe's harem tendencies were given greater impetus. His appetite expanded omnivorously; his taste became inclusive. There was a buxom Polish woman of thirty-five, and a little later her spirited daughter of seventeen. For a time he devoted himself to Alice Blackwell. Her clear, fresh English beauty fascinated him, but her conscientious scruples baffled him for a while. With her brother safely in England, however, the girl's loneliness aided him in persuading her of the Lord's divine plan for her usefulness in the Kingdom. Alice's subsequent devotion had proved a bit embarrassing; the dear girl had not been able to conquer entirely her carnal human jealousies—but she was struggling. Later, when she became pregnant, the Prophet

arranged a marriage for her with a young Swiss-Italian cabinet-maker. Michel Bonetti now innocently rocked the Prophet's child in the beautifully carved cradle he had so joyously constructed for his Alice's bambino. Thus, Joe cared for the reputation of his handmaiden and at the same time removed the passionate Alice to a more convenient distance.

Next in the succession came a pair of pretty sisters from Ohio (Joe liked to include entire family groups in his favours). Then a brief, unsatisfactory interlude with Apostle Piatt's restless, neurotic wife. Joe regretted this episode because he doubted Letitia Piatt's discretion. At the time of the great celebration in 1841, the Prophet had taken unto himself approximately twenty "Heavenly Wives," as he called them, each bound unto him by a ceremony symbolic in all its intimate details. This ritual, evolving and expanding through the successive marriages, reached a state of intricate and subtle perfection. Two points were stressed: absolute obedience to the demand of the Spirit as interpreted by the Prophet, and complete secrecy:

"Of this Holy espousal of thy selection as heavenly wife, thou shalt speak to no man, not even to thy closest kinsman. Thy entrance into this Celestial Order is between you and the Lord, through His Prophet Joseph, and is a most Holy and secret thing. Divulge it and the wrath of God will drive you from the Kingdom."

It is significant that the twenty heavenly wives "sealed," as it was called, to the Prophet had thus far observed the vow. They might suspect, might even know other women who shared the divine privilege, but there had been no overt scandal, no hysterical woman running amuck with the story of her spiritual bondage. There had been some gossip at first: Joe had been seen coming in and out of houses at strange hours. To circumvent scandal he had fitted out a secret apartment for himself back of the offices in the Nauvoo City Hall. Ostensibly a harbour, a refuge from cares of administration, a place where the weary Prophet might withdraw from the rush of work to pray, to rest, to commune with his Angel, it became the bridal chamber for his rapidly extended succession of wives.

The apartment was presided over by one Caleb, the only negro in Nauvoo, an ardent convert to Mormonism and an idolatrous slave to "Gen'l Joe." Caleb had drifted into Nauvoo in the spring of 1840 with an amazing roll of bills (their acquisition was never clear, even to himself). The Prophet had offered to care for the money, had saved Caleb's soul by baptism, and had rewarded his conversion by making him the Prophet's special bodyguard—a post joyously filled by the light-witted negro. With the canny intuitive loyalty of an animal, Caleb fulfilled deftly the peculiar rôle delegated to him. He carried

the Prophet's orders to the various handmaidens; he guarded the secret side door to the apartment; he knew who was expected and when; he never made mistakes; he divulged nothing to the curious; he knew when to say, "The Gen'l is restin'" or "The Gen'l jest stepped out." All was accomplished with such bland simplicity that none save Joe and Pierre appreciated Caleb's genius as a social secretary. Between Joe and Caleb there developed a complete, although unspoken, understanding. Caleb's attitude of "the King can do no wrong" was pleasantly satisfying to Joe's deeply rooted need for adulation. He appreciated his black convert and demonstrated it in various small ways wholly satisfying to the negro.

About a year after his first talk with Pierre concerning polygamy, Joe caused to be published in the *Times and Seasons* a lengthy article, entitled "Plural Marriages in Ancient Religions." It was a badly organized treatise bearing the characteristic stamp of Joe's blatant argumentation. Pierre bitterly opposed its publication as inopportune, and his first violent quarrel with the Prophet resulted. But Joe, bored with material matters, irked by the conventional restrictions placed on him by various prospective wives, and flushed with the triumph of his Nauvoo successes, defiantly printed the article as a "feeler"—a line sent out to sound the temper of the people.

He got his response. It was instantaneous—thunderous. While most of his readers missed the motivation, the use of their paper to relay such "vile," "unchristian," and "revolting" facts was a "hideous insult." But to the wise Apostles who knew their Prophet, the little dissertation on concubinage brought a shock of unspeakable terror. That article provided the first evidence of the storm clouds on the otherwise rosy horizon. Until the day of its publication, Joe's fortunes, in spite of temporary set-backs and disappointments, had steadily risen and were now in full ascendancy. From the moment of its publication these fortunes declined.

That night Behr called on his old friend Rigdon. They hastened with foreboding to the newspaper office, where Sayer admitted Joe's insistence on the printing. They talked long, seriously, fearfully, and from this conference the Opposition, in abeyance since the "persecutions" in Missouri, again took up arms.

Joe recanted on the article, vociferously denying all knowledge of it and forcing Editor Sayer to take the burden of blame. On the front page of the next edition appeared the editor's apology, exculpating the righteously indignant Prophet and regretting the paper's error in falling a prey to the sacrilegious prank of some irreverent heathen, who had submitted the article allegedly on behalf of the Prophet.

Joe was given pause by this show of spirit. He had not realized the sturdy belligerent morality of the greater number of the Mormons, whose rigid adherence to established sex customs was part and parcel of their fanatical devotion to their religion. That summer, preaching to them in the grove near the unfinished Temple, he looked into the stern, uncompromising faces of these men and women whom he had assembled from all parts of the world and concluded that they were not such puppets as he had imagined. He must go at the thing in another way.

Discarding the public method of approach, he established a spy system, designed to detect all brothers whose lives might indicate an interest in a revised sex code. He had his Apostles and leaders trailed. If suspicion rested upon a prominent Mormon, a spy would shadow him on his out of town trips to Burlington, St. Louis, Quincy, and Springfield, where prostitution in the segregated districts took care of the lustful nature of erring men. When the spy reported the incident in detail to the Prophet, Joe would wait for a propitious moment for rebuking the lustful sinner:

"Brother Latham, I'm sorry to know that the call of your flesh is leading you astray. Beware of the black-eyed women who send you to destruction. The 'Spider' is an evil house, Brother, and Sadie will be your downfall. Better confine your desires to your own city—your own kind—Brother."

Often the confused brother, overwhelmed with shame, would decide that the Prophet surely did have "second sight" about everything, and he would make a full confession, whereupon Joe proved warmly human, magnanimously understanding.

"I know, Brother, just how you feel. Your needs aren't sinful, but we must remember that the Lord plants our appetites for a real purpose and that purpose is plain—we must multiply and replenish the earth. The urge to possess a woman is simply the divine command to repopulate. And there's a way this can be done—in complete accord with the *Book of Mormon* and the new Faith."

Here the brother's eyes would gleam with interest, Joe, apparently hesitant, would continue solemnly, confidentially: "When the Angel appeared and told me where you were, in that house of shame, he commanded me to convey to you a Revelation. But its nature is extraordinary; I hesitate— It's a grave question whether you're ready to receive it—"

After much circuitous, nerve-titillating delay, Joe, having sworn the Brother to secrecy, would inform him of the Plural Marriage Revelation:

"I command you that such as are strong and responsible enough should take unto themselves many women in order that

the seed of Zion shall grow and multiply apace. Verily, I say unto you this new commandment—that all women be bound over unto men who are virile and productive in Zion."

Then Joe would lead the Brother to the Egyptian mummies, kept in a vault in the basement of the Temple, and expatiate at great length on the spiritual significance of King Hadurabi's array of heavenly wives. Imitating the jargon of the crier at the medicine show he had seen in St. Louis years before, the Prophet translated the mystical characters on the mummy case to the complete satisfaction of his agreeably surprised auditor.

The Revelation, not reduced to writing, varied with the occasion, but within a few months after the initiation of the spy system Joe had inducted into his inner circle some fifty important Mormons, constituting "The Holy Order."

Pierre Fey, tolerantly aware of these puerile doings, remained aloof, smilingly reticent concerning his own amours. He did not require the clumsy hocus-pocus of an illiterate charlatan to sanction his desires. Although his Latin gallantry sometimes impelled him to remonstrate in behalf of a victim, Pierre held his peace. After all, they were Joe's creatures; he had brought them there; it was his show. He, Pierre, would keep hands off.

At least Fey felt and acted on that theory until Joe's roving eye fell upon Annette Sayer, the French-Canadian girl who had come with the group from Montreal and married Apostle Sayer almost immediately upon their arrival. Annette was a shrewd, blue-eyed girl with a mind of her own. Between her and Pierre there was a tacit understanding regarding all "these queer people." No one fooled Annette—least of all the fat-handed Prophet.

Annette's charms being less obvious than those of the average in Joe's harem, he had not appreciated her until the night of the party at the Palace. But on that evening Annette had been a dancing sprite, a sparkling demon. Piqued by Pierre's extravagant praise of Emma's beauty, Annette came to life, sprayed the semi-inebriate Joe with brilliant, teasing witticisms, and danced with him provocatively. She had followed him thoughtlessly into the grove and was totally unprepared for his lunging attack. Her screaming escape with a torn gown was seen by Pierre. He spoke no word, but vowed that Annette would never be the bride—heavenly or otherwise—of the Prophet. If Donald Sayer's wife decided to try out the latest Revelation, it would not be the Prophet with whom she experimented.

But Joe had marked Annette for his own. The haughty manner with which she passed him the next day merely whetted his desire. Her impudence provided a fetching contrast to the timorous fears and awed submission of most of his women. This game of possessing desirable women had inoculated him as with

a virus. It was a fever that nothing slaked, a disease that nothing cured.

Had lust—pure, sensual desire—motivated his pursuit, his methods would have been different, and his elaborate, complicated paraphernalia for seducing women would have been unnecessary. The easy access to the prostitution sections of the near-by river towns would have tempted him, but the Prophet once confided to Pierre: "I never took a public woman in my life. The best has been my portion—in women as in all matters—the King's portion!"

Had sensual gratification been the sole or primary motive, Joe could have fallen back on the simpler, safer device of keeping a mistress. Felicity had served that purpose in the early, uncertain, struggling Missouri interlude. But now his egomania, inflated by his meteoric rise to Power and Glory, called for the bizarre, the unlimited, the unique. Possessing all the attractive women flattered his pride; his self-assurance demanded it as its due. Hence, he cultivated wide tastes. He was not satisfied with pretty women merely; he must have favourites distinguished for wit and intellect as well. That another, particularly if he were important, should find a woman desirable was sufficient for Joe to reach out for that woman. So it had been in the case of Annette Sayer.

The day after the Palace dedication, Pierre found occasion to say to Joe in his slow, flexible, yet significant tone, "You are to leave Sister Annette alone—completely alone!"

Joe's brows arched in surprise; his voice was insolent: "So, the secretive Pierre does have human desires? He hankers after the little French Sister. At last I'm discovering your heart." Joe laughed aloud, but Pierre coolly insisted:

"Keep away from her. She isn't interested in your latest Revelation." As he turned to leave the astonished but amused Prophet, he threw back over his shoulder; "If you ignore this warning, you'll discover other things about your French Apostle, Pierre Fey!"

Since Pierre found Annette desirable, Joe marked her for himself, but in the not too near future. He had several on his list sufficiently attractive to keep him occupied for some time. . . .

Although he made repeated attempts to regain his wife, he invariably came face to face with a curiously remote woman, whose disconcertingly penetrating gaze he could not long endure. Returning late at night, he made no more assaults upon her closed door, but carefully tiptoed past its accusing grey panel on his way to his own solitary chamber. He told himself that he would get her back when he wanted her badly enough; of course she would come back—he knew—he hoped she would. . . .

But in the meantime the succession of women who made up

the programme of his days and nights was extended more assiduously. Fervently Joe pleaded Zion's needs, but when the woman breathed her "Yes," it was the Prophet's ego that responded with a spurt of energy, and the little Demon Pride checked up another victory to the fatal fascination of the Prophet of Zion.

Chapter Forty-four

NEAR THE CLOSE OF HER FIRST DAY IN NAUVOO, SUSA HAD FOUND her way to the home of Timothy's sister, Alice Blackwell Bonetti. Alice took the immigrant girl into her home and partially into her heart. Susa fitted easily into the Bonetti household; she adored Alice and the fat baby, Benito, and she liked the simple, garrulous Brother Bonetti. They were kind to the Welsh girl, at first because of the ardent and eloquent letters she carried from Tim, commanding them to shelter and protect her until he could return to make her his wife. But soon, as Tim had predicted, they loved her for herself—for her impulsive, childlike naturalness. There was much of the Welsh mountain country in Susa, whose wild, passionate nature was linked with the gentlest shyness. She sang and wept intermittently, but her moods of melancholy were long and deep; her loneliness for her mother, who had died, for Tim, who was on the other side of that terrible, cruel sea, was pitiful, and the Bonettis tried hard to distract her from her sorrows.

Susa was scarcely able to wait through the first night in Nauvoo to carry to the Prophet, Tim's own letter stating his case and asking that he be returned to Nauvoo to take his bride. Alice quickly volunteered to act as emissary.

"I know the Prophet well, Susa. I shall use all my power to persuade him to bring our Timothy back to us." Alice spoke with such feeling that tears came to the eyes of both women.

Susa waited patiently for Alice's return, but when Sister Bonetti did finally come back late in the afternoon, her manner was distraught and she would only say, "He will return Tim as soon as possible, Susa. No, he wouldn't say exactly when—"

"But on the next boat, surely?" The girl's eyes pleaded anxiously.

Alice turned away abruptly: "We shall hope—and pray, little Susa."

Joe's reasons for delaying the return of Timothy Blackwell were excellent to his own way of thinking. The keen Canadian had amply demonstrated the penetrating and logical quality of his thinking while drafting Nauvoo's laws, and Joe feared he would discover certain unconventionalities in his sister's life to which he might not take kindly. Then, too, Tim was a highly successful proselytizer among the Welsh, who made excellent recruits for the Kingdom.

So to Alice's entreaties the Prophet sternly admonished, "Your brother is favoured in that God yields him great harvests of souls. Warn this young girl that she must not interfere with his usefulness. Send her to me if she complains, and I shall counsel with her."

But Alice hastily replied, "Oh, she will be patient—I promise you."

"What is she like—your brother's choice?"

Joe spoke casually, picturing to himself a crude, heavy-featured peasant of the type Wales sent in such abundance.

Alice grew cautious. "Just an ordinary country girl, but honest and strong, devoted to the Faith."

"Yes, yes. Well, guard her, Sister Alice. She will be in good hands. And now I have pressing business to settle."

Alice, thus summarily dismissed through the side door, walked slowly with heavy heart. She strongly suspected that the Prophet's "pressing business" would be ushered into the *Positively No Admittance* room by the obsequious Caleb. Her mind jealously ran over the possibilities, trying to fix on one against whom it might throw its surging wave of hate. "And I had so hoped to please him to-day," she thought dolorously. "I do want my brother back! He need never know, but I would feel safer—surer. Poor Susa, how can I tell her that I have little hope?"

Alice walked far out into the country, whipping her turgid blood into an excited flow, filling her brooding mind with the glory of the autumn colours, before she had courage to return to Susa, to encourage her: "We shall hope—and pray, little Susa."

Each boat from England brought letters from Timothy, pleading for stronger intercession in his behalf.

"Have you yourself seen the Prophet, Susa? Surely your heart will tell you how to plead for me—for us. I beg you do all in your power to bring me to your side."

But when Susa asked Alice, "Should I not go at once, so I may tell Tim about it?" the woman replied firmly, "No! You will only antagonize him and delay the matter. Take my advice, Susa. I'll write Tim myself."

Susa waited. She loved the Bonettis, but her heart was lonely, homesick for the wild Dee country. She took long walks alone along the river bluffs to the south of the city. That first autumn in Nauvoo she explored the entire river country. Clad in her native costume, her shawl covering her heavy braids, she ran like a wild creature up and down the hills until she became lovingly familiar with every look-out, every path and ravine. Alice remonstrated because desperadoes and wolves infested the islands and inlets about Nauvoo, but upon Susa the compulsion to get away, to be alone, was stronger than the desire to protect her life.

The young girl's beauty was an elusive thing, centring in her eyes and in the emotional mobility of her piquant oval face. Her shyness kept her apart from the life of the young people, yet all who knew her found her attractive. A number of the

young men made advances, until she begged Sister Alice to tell them all that she was "promised" to Apostle Timothy.

Susa always went to church when the Prophet preached. In the now famous grove tabernacle, she sat huddled in her shawl as the Great One's voice thundered over the audience, making strange, exciting music in the air, causing leaves to shimmer in ecstasy. Several times in her walks about the city she had seen him approaching, usually on horseback, but remembering that one moment when her eyes had first encountered his god-like gaze, she always shrank into a doorway.

So Susa baked and sewed and cared for Alice's Benito, went to church worshipfully, sedulously studied the *Book of Mormon*, and prayerfully tried to grow in grace, while her lonely heart yearned for her native Wales and her beloved Tim. She wrote long letters to him and lived for the arrival of mails, only to be thrown into despair by the entreaties of his letters. She watched the city of Nauvoo grow before her eyes from twelve to thirteen to fourteen to fifteen thousand souls; she saw the founding of the university, the expansion of trade and commerce, the busy activity of politicians and business men; she watched the mighty pilasters of the Temple rise, the spire mount, the last stone placed; she attended the awesome, magnificent opening service of the Lord's greatest tabernacle. But all the time she longed for Tim's hand to touch her—Tim's voice to comfort her.

Thus a year passed.

Then the Prophet saw her. She was returning from a walk in the late afternoon. It was on the high river trail which skirted the bluff, giving superb glimpses of the heavily wooded ravines along the great brown Mississippi below. She loved this walk with its reminder of her own land. At the moment she was resting against a boulder at the edge of the trail. Two horsemen appeared—the Prophet and Pierre. Her heart fluttered with timidity, but there was no escape. They saw her and drew rein.

"Are you lost, little girl?" The Prophet's voice was kind, sympathetic.

With a great effort Susa raised her head, answering in a clear, trembling voice, "No, Prophet Joseph, I'm just walking."

Joe stared at her. Those eyes! Then a memory flashed through his mind—the day of the parade! The peasant girl from the boat—he had been looking for her all year—where the devil did she keep herself? With an effusive warmth he continued, "So, you're one of us? I remember seeing you, my Sister. What is your name?"

"Susa Owen, sir. Come from Wales, sir."

"And where do you live, Sister Susa?"

"With Sister Bonetti, sir."

"Ah!" A curious light of recognition came into Joe's face. "So," he smiled, "you are the promised bride of Apostle Blackwell?"

"Oh yes, sir," the girl's face was flooded with joy and pride. With sudden daring she went on, "I am, Prophet Joseph, and I wait only for the time when you will allow him to return."

For a moment Joe regarded her in speculative silence, then "Come to see me, Sister Susa—to-morrow at two—at my office. We shall discuss the matter."

"Yes, Prophet Joseph. Thank you, I will." Susa's face was eager, hopeful.

Pierre had not spoken, but he swept off his hat and gave the girl an oddly commiserating look as he said, "Good day, Sister Susa," and rode away with the Prophet.

All the way home, through the grey shadows of the lingering dusk, Susa danced like a happy sprite. She was sure the meeting had been the work of God—of Providence leading her to the Great One so that Tim might be returned to her.

That night she eagerly related the circumstances of the chance meeting to Alice, but was hurt and puzzled when Sister Bonetti turned away, murmuring in a dead voice, "May the Lord help you, child."

The Prophet had acquired considerable knowledge regarding the handling of women. Instinct warned him that Susa in this first interview was not to be rushed. That she was a simple, religious girl, deeply and hopelessly in love with a holy man, made her, Joe realized, impervious to purely feminine weakness. If he were to win her, his approach must be guarded, sanctified by religion. Susa taxed the Prophet's skill in seduction as no other victim had before, but he enjoyed this trial of his genius. At the end of his first hour's conference with her in his public office, he dismissed her:

"I shall pray over this matter and hope the Angel reveals to me what we wish. But, dear Sister Susa, remember that God's ways are not always ours. He may have a greater destiny for you and your noble Timothy than you dream. Let us trust in God and await Revelation."

That was to be the keynote—Revelation! After the ardent, grateful girl had modestly retreated, Joe sat thinking, his voluptuous mouth loosely open. "What a slender, straight body the girl has—like a boy's—no breasts yet—but a red mouth and eyes that burn like coals—damned timid—like a baby fox—and she wants Tim back!" He laughed. "The missionary life suits you better, Tim. You'll get used to celibacy."

Carefully, shrewdly, with an unprecedented patience for him, Joe played with Susa his game of the Great, All Wise, Holy One. She came to him for an hour each Tuesday afternoon. Together

they struggled to comprehend God's seemingly complex way of dealing with Timothy.

"Each time the Angel appears I am commanded, 'Let Apostle Blackwell continue the good work in Wales. His mission is there!'" Joe spoke with sad reluctance. "I sympathize with you, dear child, but we must be firm in the Faith."

Susa trudged homeward dolorously.

Then, at a later interview, Joe suggested: "Perhaps there is something in your heart—a lack of obedience to divine will—a resentment against your lot. Might God be disciplining you?" Susa's puzzled eyes, misty with pain, aroused his impatience and he ventured ahead: "In my Revelation last night I saw you as a bride, Sister Susa, robed in white, but your groom was the Church—the Lamb of God. You were wrapped about in fire, radiant, happy—true daughter of the Holy Circle—and Brother Timothy from above gave his blessing."

"But what can it mean, Prophet Joseph?" the young girl, wide-eyed, pleaded. "I can be wife only to the man I love—to Tim. Why should he be above me? He should be at my side." Susa struggled earnestly to comprehend the meaning of this strange religion.

Slowly, cautiously, Joe prepared her mind for another kind of marriage—that of the Heavenly Bride.

"Not of the flesh in the usual sense, although the fleshly union takes place as a symbol to show God one's complete submission. The chosen Brides, appointed by Revelation, are God's inner circle—His handmaidens, so to speak, and are especially endowed with divine responsibilities. When a woman becomes the Bride of the Church—that is, 'sealed' in marriage to the Prophet as the symbol—she then has perfect understanding."

Little Susa puzzled over this mystery during the ensuing days, her mind and heart a turmoil of confused fears and questionings. She longed to discuss these matters with Sister Alice, but the Prophet's strict injunction to secrecy forbade; then, too, Sister Alice's manner had changed—she was now remote, cool, almost disapproving. On Tuesday afternoons—Susa's hour with the Prophet—Alice became nervous, irritable, sullen. With no one to talk to, Susa found what little solace she could in pouring out her despair in letters to Tim. Then came a letter from Wales upbraiding her:

"I fear you have grown critical of our religion. You must have more faith. Do not puzzle your brain to understand, but have greater trust in your elders. You can best prepare yourself for becoming my bride by growing more deeply rooted in the tenets of Zion. Read the *Book of Mormon*, hearken unto the voice of the Prophet, and you can do no wrong." . . .

On her next visit to the Prophet Joe spoke to her sternly, solemnly, sadly, as if he were deeply grieved: "The Revelation came last night. The Angel spoke clearly. Here it is exactly as it was given to me. 'Not until Sister Susa humbles her spirit, becomes the Bride of the Church, and the spiritual wife of the most high Prophet will I return her affianced husband or place My blessing on her worldly marriage. She must discipline her soul to submit to God's will—to accept submissively the spirit of the Lord through My Prophet Joseph. Even though it be difficult for him to urge her and for her to yield, I demand the fulfilment of this Heavenly Marriage. Upon its completion you may order the return of Brother Blackwell to espouse the anointed Heavenly Bride, Susa Owen.' "

To add emphasis Joe had the Revelation in writing—in the peculiarly distorted characters he affected for divine commands. He handed the paper to the girl to study, intending to retrieve and destroy it later, but in his absorption in the drama unfolding, he forgot that little matter.

Susa was pale, deathly quiet, and Joe masked his eagerness as he regarded her with a paternal, oily solemnity. When she had finished reading, she spoke in a low voice: "What do you want me to do, Brother Joseph?"

"Do? Why—trust yourself to the Revelation!" He was a bit disconcerted by the very simplicity of the question. "Are you strong enough in the Faith?"

She countered, her words coming haltingly, painfully: "You are sure that this—this is God's will—his command to me—Susa Owen?"

"Quite sure. Revelation is infallible—of necessity." The Prophet watched the agony of the young girl's flower-like face, the slender, nervous fingers folding the paper in her hands. Her eerie beauty fascinated him and he grew impatient. "If you do not believe in the truth of Revelation, you are not a fit wife for an Apostle."

"And afterward—when I have—shown my faith—you will—the Lord will let Timothy come back—marry me?"

Joe's face darkened, but he answered decisively, "Yes, didn't the Revelation so state?"

The girl stood pale, swaying. He thought for a moment she would fall. But raising her magnificent, dark eyes, she looked at him directly, courageously: "Then I am ready."

Meanwhile in England Timothy Blackwell grew hollow-eyed from worry and uncertainty. The letters from Nauvoo, three months in transit, brought him small comfort and little hope. Susa's breathed a pain and desperation that tore his heart, and his sister's confused him with their vague, almost cold peri-

phrasis. One communication from the Prophet reminded him of the original instructions to which he, Timothy, had pledged loyalty: "To you, Apostle of God, go though you never return, and commit all you have unto the Lord—your wife, your loved ones, your property. Let Truth and self-sacrifice be your motto, remembering always that your chief object in this life is to preach the Gospel of Mormon, to convert sinners to God's word as revealed in the Golden Plates, and to build up the Kingdom by sending converts to Nauvoo. Amen."

To discipline his impatient heart, Tim preached with redoubled zeal. The converts flocked into his fold. As he stood on the quay watching the boats carry them away to Nauvoo, his eyes followed them until they disappeared below the horizon. With a heavy heart he turned again to the work of the Church of Mormon.

In the following spring, after Susa had been gone six months, his old friend Donald Sayer, sent out with the "Second Fifty," joined him at the Liverpool office. It grieved Timothy to find a certain lessening of ardour in Sayer's attitude towards the Prophet. While maintaining strict loyalty to the Faith, the erstwhile editor of *The Times and Seasons* admitted fears that too great power had affected their leader's clarity of vision. Little by little Tim dragged from Donald the reasons for these fears: the gossip about Joe's private life, the publication of the article on polygamy, the dubious political alignments, the muddled financial condition of the Church, the difficulties with "Gentile" neighbours. . . . Tim, slow to believe, was nevertheless made more seriously concerned for his own affairs. Sayer's lukewarm spirit dampened his own ardour. His preaching became less effective, and with his enthusiasm dampened, he grew deeply, darkly restless.

One day, six months after Sayer's arrival, a mail boat brought both of them letters from Nauvoo. The two friends walked down to the quay to read. Susa's letter filled pages of incoherent, troubled thoughts, the crying of a frightened child. It puzzled and unnerved Timothy. He stared moodily at the motley array of boats idling on the sluggish harbour, when Sayer sharply exclaimed, "Listen to this, Timothy!" He read:

"The feeling against the Prophet grows apace. He and Apostle Rigdon have quarrelled bitterly. Some say it is over Brother Joseph's improper advances towards Nancy. In church last Sunday the Prophet insulted Apostles Rigdon and Behr, called them seditious enemies who would be read out of Nauvoo if they didn't mend their ways. Rebellion almost broke out right in church because Brother Sidney's character, as you know, is most moral. Later that evening the Prophet, having imbibed

too freely, quarrelled with a stranger in the tap-room, and the two had to be separated. Naturally these doings are kept as quiet as possible, but Brother Pierre tells me he thinks the Prophet really possessed of devils instead of the Holy Spirit, and he prophesies grave troubles for our Religion. I am afraid he is right, and I do beseech you, my dear husband, to return to Nauvoo and do what you can to save the Faith. . . .”

A silence followed as the two men brought order into their perturbed thoughts. Then Sayer spoke decisively: “Tim, I’m going back. The *Iliad* sails in a few days, and I’m going with her.”

“I’ll join you.” Timothy’s voice was thin and frightened. His world had crumpled during the reading of Annette’s letter. He began to understand the strange terror running through Susa’s almost hysterical pleadings. Sick with foreboding, he added, “God forgive me if I wrong any man, much less a Prophet of God, by suspecting him of evil unjustly. But I’m going back to find out for myself. I must—for Susa’s sake.”

On the day that Susa, grown courageous through the desperation of loneliness, became the Heavenly Wife of the Church, Timothy, aboard the *Iliad*, turned his back on England and started home to claim his bride.

Long before the *Iliad* reached America, Susa Owen fled from Nauvoo and was lost to Timothy as finally as if death had taken her. She crumpled under the shock of the cruel ordeal to which she had gone with such mad, deluded courage. The moment she passed into the room guarded by the dark Caleb, the restraint of Joe’s month of caution fell from him in a flash. As the key clicked in the lock, the tense child turned to beg delay and found, not the solemn, paternal, holy man of God, but a strangely terrifying creature who took her body between soft, hot hands, who seemed not to hear her pleadings. When she knew there was no hope of escape, she mercifully fainted. When she recovered, the Prophet was gone, and the black man knelt beside her, bathing her head. He helped her put on her dress, tied her shoes, comforting her with soft, clucking sounds.

“You’s all right, Missie. You’s de Bride ob de Church now. Take it easy, you’s all right. You can leave by de stairway here.”

Caleb picked up from the table the little pile of her belongings—mittens, a crumpled handkerchief, a folded bit of paper, and thrust them into her reticule.

“Good night, Sista Susa,” he said, and led her to the door. It was dusk outside. Candles burned in the windows as Susa

passed with slow, painful steps along the street leading to the river. Still dazed, she but vaguely realized the horror of what had happened to her. She felt leaden—a slow bleeding of her heart. Reaching a spot at the edge of town—a bluff overlooking the river and the Prophet's Palace—the exhausted girl sank to a stone where she had often sat, gazing out over the river to the Iowa bluff beyond. To-night she seemed to see the familiar scene as one dead might look back upon a beloved life. Lost in dull misery, she did not hear the approach of the tall woman coming from the town.

The beautiful lady, struck by the girl's despairing face, spoke to her in a deep, sympathetic voice.

“Are you ill, Sister? May I help you?”

“You are—you are Sister Emma?” The whispered question seemed to issue from tragic, haunted eyes. Emma could not remember the face.

“Yes, but I do not know you, I believe.” When the girl did not offer her name, Emma continued, “I am on my way home. I live there,” she said, pointing to the Palace a hundred paces down the path. “Won't you come home with me and rest?”

The question brought the dazed girl to sudden life. In a voice that haunted Emma the rest of her life, she cried as she sprang to her feet, “Oh, no, no, no. . . . Please forgive me! You are good and beautiful—you are good—I know—” Sobbing, she turned and ran up the road. Emma hesitated, but when the girl did not look back, she continued on her way home.

Later that night Susa crept stealthily into the Bonetti house and into the small room at the back, which she shared with the baby. For the last time she lay with the child's warm, tender body against hers. Slow, hot tears of bitter renunciation watered her pillow. At dawn, before the Bonettis were up, she put what things she could carry into her shawl, took her small store of money from its hiding-place in her mother's carved chest, and with one last agonized moment beside little Benito, stole from the house.

When the *Maid of Iowa* sailed at nine, Susa stood beside the deck rail, watching the receding Illinois shore, her vision blurred by a mist of tears. With sharp anguish she understood the finality of what she was doing—leaving for ever the city she had sought little more than a year before with such high hopes—such faith. Dimly she realized she was dying to Timothy—or hope of him—but all that seemed unreal—far, far away. . . . To-day nothing seemed clear save the need to escape the shame that overwhelmed her—to run away—to lose herself from the place that had killed her. . . .

From St. Louis Susa wrote to Alice an evasive, vague little note begging forgiveness for all her mistakes, and ending, “Just

tell Timothy to forget me. I am unworthy, but I shall always love him."

Alice would have understood even if she had not found the much-folded, crumpled sheet of paper in the reticule left in the chest. A deep rage rising in her heart, she read the Revelation. A new purpose came slowly to life as she carefully hid the little piece of paper.

"I've been blind, cruel, a coward. Poor little Susa. We must find her and quit this place."

Chapter Forty-five

IN THE AUTUMN OF THIS YEAR, 1842, THE PROPHET AND HIS FOLLOWERS faced a period in which mighty currents were beginning to swirl about their ship of state. A few of the wise—notably Rigdon, Fey, and Behr—felt the tug of the treacherous undertow, but Joe, looking across the serene surface, smiled upon the alarmists indifferently. The floods of adversity began their rise in October; they swelled slowly but steadily, creeping about Nauvoo, destroying its foundations so stealthily that few of the fifteen thousand inhabitants saw cause for concern.

Although the Prophet scoffed at the idea of danger (Did not the Church embrace some fifty thousand paying members now?), his consuming passion for the as yet unrevealed Revelation on Heavenly Marriage was given check by the brief, tragic passage of Susa Owen across his life. In her flight Susa robbed Joe of far more than her bodily presence. When she glided south on the Mississippi—an inconspicuous, despairing little thing huddled against the deck rail—she, unknowingly, gave a telling blow to the ego of the man who had driven her forth. His self-assurance, his sense of unlimited power over women, never fully recovered. There was something staggering, paralysing, in her courageous taking off.

The sensation was new to the holy man. He had shrugged off Judy's tigerish attack, had completely forgotten it by the time the three jagged scars on his face were healed. He had rationalized Emma's withdrawal, promising himself the satisfaction of reconquering her in his own good time. Meanwhile he found solace in the succession of meek and willing "wives" who absorbed much of his time. True, Nancy Rigdon fled his approach as though he were a horned monster, and Annette Sayer had proved annoyingly evasive (she had practically ceased attending church and other Mormon observances since Sayer's departure for England). But then he had not given serious attention to subduing Nancy and Annette. With few exceptions women eventually came easily, willingly, often too eagerly to his hand. He had reason to believe most of these Heavenly Brides diligent and faithful as chosen handmaidens, and this pleased him. The marriage ritual stressed the wisdom of joyous abandon for both persons. He was not selfish; he preferred that the pleasures be mutual.

For Susa, however, Joe had felt a peculiarly strong and possessive desire. In spite of her obvious purity, her immature and slender body, her glowing mouth and eyes betrayed a warm and yielding nature. The naive trust she brought him in his rôle as Prophet flattered him, but her innocent evasiveness restrained him through months of difficult sparring. Unaccustomed to

self-control, the increased desire of waiting robbed him of all discretion. He had ravaged Susa in a mad rush of unreasoning passion.

Ashamed, chagrined, worried, Joe despatched a note to her by Caleb the next morning, begging an interview. He could not believe she had gone. In desperation he put Pierre on the trail. The smooth Frenchman gave his report, not without a secret, diabolical satisfaction :

“She left by steamer on the early boat the day after your bridal night.” His face darkened as he added threateningly, “I told you to let children alone. I’m glad I refused to help you in that robbery. You’re crazy. That girl was a virgin, but no fool, and Blackwell is a damned smart man. I tell you, Smith, you’ll pay for this folly.”

Joe did not flare back. After Fey strode indignantly from the office, the Prophet slumped into his chair and sat heavily, his face dark and bewildered. “God, I wish she hadn’t done that—run away!” A sudden picture of Susa as he had last seen her, lying limp, deathly pale on the bed, contorted his face. The terrible piteousness of her condition had caused him to summon Caleb to help her—then he had rushed away in fear. To-day, crushed by the finality of Fey’s report, he opened the table drawer, took a long drink of rum, and turned with desperate determination to the business affairs of the Church. . . .

Nauvoo was now the phenomenal city of the West, the “Queen of the Mississippi,” as she advertised herself to the chagrin of rival river towns. Her great stretches of land, her booming industries, her trade and commerce, her rapidly mounting population constituted a serious threat to the very existence of competing villages.

The Temple, now complete and dedicated, stood high on the hill, a landmark seen for miles up and down the river and from all the trails leading into Nauvoo. The giant limestone edifice, the much-heralded marvel of the age, capped the city, and with its hundred-foot steeple dramatically piercing the sky, drew all eyes upward to the Power and Glory of Zion.

“The foundation, ladies and gentlemen, is one hundred feet wide and one hundred and fifty feet long, and its great limestone walls are sixty feet high,” the enthusiastic caretaker would explain to gaping visitors. “Around its imposing portico may be seen thirty pilasters of polished marble, each worth \$3000, on whose pedestals are carved new moons and on whose capitals are carved rising suns. The baptismal font measures twelve by sixteen feet and is supported by sixteen hand-carved oxen, copied after the finest three-year-old steer that could be found. The

interior is not yet complete, but already the magnificent edifice has cost \$1,000,000."

The continual stream of immigration poured money and man-power into the city and surrounding country. The flow seemed infinite. Nauvoo—at last a reality! Zion—at last an Empire! The Prophet Joseph bestrode his world like a colossus! All looked glowingly healthy and prosperous. This was the surface picture—the one upon which the faithful gazed rapturously as they buzzed happily about their innumerable activities.

But even now the undercurrents of envy, resentment, fear, and anger were beginning to stir. The same dark forces which had expelled God's chosen from Harmony, from Palmyra, and from Zion were marshalling themselves for an assault on this last seemingly impregnable citadel of the Lord.

The Prophet had not learned his lesson. Power and glory, too easily acquired, had turned to poisonous ambition in the veins of the undisciplined egomaniac. With a nonchalant disregard of obvious symptoms, he blatantly fanned the fires of antagonism smouldering everywhere about him.

The envy of the neighbouring river towns was inevitable. Nauvoo in its mushroom growth of three years already surpassed the older, more slowly developing competitors. Struggling trading posts and small commercial towns along the river, even inland villages scarcely able to keep alive, were drained of their strength to feed the insatiable maw of the octopus. Settlers lured by the Midas touch of the wizard city turned Mormon and gave themselves, body and soul, to the Prophet.

"Come over into Nauvoo and enjoy the fruits of the Kingdom. Join our ranks and we will make you Princes of Empire. There are no poor people in Nauvoo! Here, all share the riches of God's blessings! But we don't want any damned heathen sneaking among us. Come and be baptized; obey the laws and share in the gains—or get out!"

This gospel had drawn heavily on the near-by towns, but it had engendered a bitter resentment in the hearts of settlers who remained without the fold. In Rushville, in Carthage, in Macomb, in Warsaw, and lately, even in the once friendly Quincy, there burned a dark and ominous hatred of Nauvoo—of the "Mormon Rats—Robbers—Liars—Cheats," as they were variously abused.

The churches and the newspapers slowly but surely forged a mighty weapon "to defend this Christian land against the sacrilegious fanatics who defame the name of God with their heathen rituals." The *Warsaw Signal*, which three years before warmly greeted the persecuted Mormons fleeing the barbaric Missouri, now warned the country of the menace of a debauchee, a false prophet, who made of seduction a religious ritual.

Rigdon, showing Joe these editorials, begged, "Try to placate that editor. He was once our staunch friend. The loss of his sympathy is a calamity."

But Joe contemptuously tossed off a reply :

Sir,—Discontinue sending us your vile newspaper. Its filthy contents are a pollution, a mess of lies, an iniquitous libel which I disdain to touch.

Yours with complete loathing,
JOE SMITH.

P.S.—I dare you to publish this in your rotten sheet.

The political activities of the Prophet were distinguished for their agile vacillation rather than for any shrewd or definite purpose. In each of the elections he had sold the Mormon vote to the highest bidder. He played hide and seek with Whigs and Democrats impartially and in a manner that won him the masked resentment of both parties. Illinois, frightened, be-stirred itself to combat the menace of fifteen thousand votes wielded autocratically by one man—a "madman."

All of these outer rumblings, added to certain inner disturbances, galvanized the Opposition into definite action. Again there began the nocturnal meetings at the home of Brother Behr, this time with Sidney Rigdon presiding. "We reaffirm our faith in our religion, but we must defend it from its enemies, within as well as without. We bend all our energies to that purpose!"

One evening after dinner, about a month after Susa's flight, Joe came out of his Palace and sauntered down to the bench by the river's edge, where Emma sat watching the angry rolling of the muddy torrent swollen from recent rains. It was early November and the chill of imminent frost penetrated the air. Over the naked trees hung the faint purple haze of late autumn. Venus and a slender crescent moon glowed dimly near the horizon.

"You'll take cold here, Emma."

"Oh, no—I'm quite warm," she answered, drawing a bright red shawl more closely about her. The knitted cover moulded her strong, firm body like a glove, from which her white throat and poised head rose with dignified repose. Moved against his will by her perennial grace, Joe watched her as she continued to look into the angry stream.

"What do you see in it—with these hours of gazing?"

"Life—always going on and on. The bigness—like God—like the seasons—see what the storms have done to it!"

There was a pause in the low, quiet voice as she realized the anomaly of what she was saying to her husband—of all people. But Joe was moody.

“I don’t like it—cold, muddy, tiresome. Its everlasting noise keeps me awake nights.”

“I wouldn’t sleep without hearing it.”

Joe looked hungrily at his wife as he continued with sulky petulance: “There may be other reasons I don’t sleep. Why don’t you come back to the south room—to-night, Emma?”

Impulsively he moved close to her, put one arm about her shoulders possessively, and lifted her head to kiss her, but before the direct gaze of the immobile statue in his arms, Joe’s eyes shifted. Ashamed, he released her. “You’re not a true wife to hold a grudge for ever. You’re like your river—cold, cruel, no heart.” He rose to leave. His voice regained its flippancy: “Well, good night. I leave you alone with your river.”

“You are going back to the city to-night?” She tried to keep her voice calmly casual.

“Yes—Council of the Twelve at the Temple. Good-bye.”

As he turned up the hill, a look of quick compassion came into Emma’s eyes. She watched him swing jauntily along the path and reflected on the sudden change that had recently come over him. His restless depression boded ill for a peaceful life here. Old doubts and fearful questionings crept into her mind.

Emma did not shrink from the warm turmoil of human life. She merely chose the channels in which to share in it. Having closed her heart against one enduring passion, she looked inward and to nature for the joy her spirit needed. She found in the beauty of her home, its garden rich with seasonal flowers, in the raging storm, the dying glory of the day, the poignant drama of the seasons, all—almost all—that was denied in the passionate love of a man.

But her roots had penetrated deeply into the rocky soil that nourished her bravely won tranquillity. “Here I belong. Here I must stay. I will not be moved.” Clinging to this resolve, her lips said the words as one recites a liturgy. From these shadowy, hovering thoughts she turned back to the river. . . .

Climbing the hill to the city through a fine drizzle, the Prophet, his thoughts a confusion of resentment and bewilderment, mumbled, “Damn women anyhow! Emma’s a rock—an iceberg. . . . Still, she’s far and away the most beautiful woman I’ve ever seen. Strange what she does to me—even now. I should have kissed her anyway—in spite of her airs. She’s my wife, isn’t she?”

Remembering nights when he had possessed her, he felt a puzzled kind of pain, a chagrin, at having lost her.

He found himself at the top of the hill. His thoughts leaped to Susa, and he stopped short. At this same spot he had first seen her. Something led the man to sit for a space upon the large rock—to brood moodily. His spirit and body felt numb, cold—like the bleak November night. . . . "Susa! Nothing's gone right with me since that happened. No flavour in women any more. All of 'em dumb, heavy, like Minna Pyle," he was thinking of his latest acquisition, "or defiant little cats like Nancy Rigdon." A bit heavily he rose from the damp rock and went on his way into the town. "I'm fed up on this place. Have half a notion to move on—farther west—or start something different. Tired of the same old thing."

There was yet a half-hour before he was due at the Temple. Passing the Sayer cottage, he noticed an edge of light around the drawn shade, and instantly his mood shifted; his shoulders straightened, his blood quickened, and his face took on a Pan-like cast as without farther consideration he passed through the garden and knocked imperiously at Annette Sayer's side door.

Silence. . . .

He again knocked—impatiently this time.

After a little Annette opened the door slightly and Joe pushed boldly into the front room.

"Just passing on my way to the Temple. Thought I'd make a professional call, Sister Annette. Alone?" Not waiting for a reply, he continued amiably, "Too bad—dangerous for a pretty woman like you to live alone." He laughed boisterously and seated himself comfortably near Annette. As he talked, his eyes played over his Apostle's wife appraisingly. "Not pretty," he thought, "but there's something about her. Plenty of fire . . . Pierre should know."

Annette sat in hesitant confusion on the edge of her chair. She had scarcely spoken a word, and her momentary embarrassment gave way to a contemptuously tolerant amusement as the Prophet flaunted his charms. He talked incessantly, as if he said, "Admire me! Look me over! See, I bear you no grudge. I'm condescending to call upon you in your humble home—to forget bygones." Finally, her mocking silence becoming obvious, Joe became more professional.

"Why haven't you been to church, Sister Annette?"

"I've been busy with other things."

"Other things? What can be more important than the Lord's work?"

Annette's eyes taunted a bit as she shrugged her expressive little shoulders: "Oh, the Lord's work? That's another thing."

Joe ignored the barb and, resolutely agreeable, took another line of attack. "What news from your good husband? Does he like England better?"

"He loathes it!" Suddenly Annette's manner changed. She coaxed gently: "Brother Joseph, I wish you would bring him back. Donald is far more of a writer than a preacher, and it seems to me that the *Times* needs his editorial skill. Can't he serve the Lord here to better advantage? Couldn't you perhaps get a Revelation in this matter—for my sake?"

The young woman smiled with pretty pleading. At this unexpected friendliness from the usually sharp French girl, the Prophet expanded. He relaxed into his oily, holy manner. "Now that you talk reasonably, in the true spirit of an obedient saint, I'm inclined to listen to your suggestion, my dear Sister. I don't mind telling you, Sister Annette, that your own headstrong wilfulness may have influenced the Lord's disposition of your husband. But if you have repented, seen the light, and are willing to——"

This was the point in the formula at which he always hesitated. Annette responded sympathetically, her eyes darting soft, shy glances.

"Yes, Prophet Joseph. If I have been at fault, tell me what I can do to rectify my errors."

Her sparkling eyes implored, her eager, direct manner intoxicated. His luck had changed! With a rush of enthusiasm he talked, led on by her helpful questions, expounding in detail the joys and responsibilities of the Heavenly Marriage.

When he had finished, Annette with a long-drawn sigh asked, "You are sure that I am called to this choice gathering of Handmaidens?"

"Absolutely, Sister Annette. The moment I saw you, I knew the Lord had sent you to Nauvoo for that great purpose." Joe, flushed with the conviction of imminent victory, rose and approached the woman. "I can't tell you how it pleases me, lifts my spirit, to find that you have heard the Voice, seen the light. I promise you, Sister——"

He was about to embrace the delectable creature when a horrible thing happened—the woman laughed! Long, mockingly, peal on peal of irrepressible, hysterical laughter came from the pretty red mouth, which but a moment ago seemed soft with submissive obedience. The Prophet, frozen with a disturbing fear, thought she had gone mad and was about to lay restraining hands upon her when from behind the portière leading into the adjacent dining-room, Pierre Fey stepped forth. He came straight to the Prophet and without preamble slapped his face a stinging blow.

"I told you to leave this woman alone! I warned you!"

The fight, though brief, was sharp and fierce. Both men, artful wrestlers, fought strenuously, spurred on by their gallery. Annette, a trifle pale, watched, making no effort to stop the

battle which wrecked her neat, cosy room. But Joe's weight was no match for Pierre's lightning agility, and he soon found himself pinned to the floor. Pierre let him free. Joe, getting awkwardly to his feet, glared viciously.

"You'll smart for this, you French bastard—counterfeiter! You'd be in jail now if I hadn't made something out of you. I'll have you thrown out of Nauvoo!"

"Go ahead, Prophet Joe. I'll enjoy that. But remember I have the papers and Sister Sayer's testimony! After to-night we have all we want to give you the rope."

"You framed me—double-crossed me!"

Into Joe's anger entered an incredulous bewilderment that such a ghastly mockery could have been perpetrated on him. He looked from the woman to the man. But under the acrid, darting contempt of Annette's eyes and the supercilious, almost jeering assurance of Pierre's, Joe crumbled. He gathered himself painfully together, looking about helplessly for his coat and hat.

"Here they are, but you mustn't go to the Temple like that!" Annette took pity, brought him a towel, helped him adjust his dishevelled clothing, handed him a comb. By the time he was ready to leave, Pierre had regained his suave, easy manner and spoke casually.

"We're both crooks, Smith—only I admit it, sometimes. You never do. I've been in this game longer than you; you can't do what all the courts in the country have failed to do—get the goods on me! I don't like you, but there's honour among thieves. So long as you observe that honour, I'll play the game. Better restrict your Revelations to the Church. Child rape and this annoying my friends are forbidden."

He paused for emphasis. "You can't hurt me, but I can break you. Ponder that. Good-bye—Prophet. I hope you've had a pleasant and instructive evening. I'll join you at the Council a little later."

With an elaborate, satirical bow, Pierre opened the door and waited. Joe turned to Annette, but about her impudent mouth there hovered the faint trace of a smile. Humiliated, he fled from the house and into the night. The drizzle had settled into a steady rain. As he ran, breathless, along the road, he gulped in draughts of the stinging, wet November air, muttering between broken curses, "God! She laughed at me—laughed!"

Chapter Forty-six

UNDER THE SHELTER OF THE TEMPLE PORTICO THE PROPHET LEANED breathlessly and wearily against the carved half-moon of a marble column. Tired, cold, dispirited, he felt utterly beaten. "I'll get even—I'll ruin that French bastard!" he had mumbled to himself as he ran up the road. But he knew that he wouldn't—that he couldn't. Fey was the one man in the world of whom the Prophet was afraid.

He pulled himself together, straightened his sore shoulders, opened the hieroglyphical portal of the Temple, and with an affected bravado strode forth to confer with his Apostles. He was late—an hour late—when he entered the "Egyptian Crypt" where the Twelve sat ranged about the great square table. They stared at him in amazement—his friends, nervously; the others, with stern disapproval. He was made suddenly aware of his battered condition when his brother, Hyram, rushed to him in alarm. He felt their gaze fasten on his closed, blackened eye and bruised mouth. Abruptly he fell into the required rôle. With swaggering nonchalance he took his place in the carved throne chair, and, throwing back his coat to reveal the full state of his dishevelment, informed his Apostles lightly:

"Sorry to have delayed you. I've been detained on matters of Church and State—a problem of discipline for an unruly brother. There are times when one must fight for the Truth. The Faith demands soldiers with courage. If any of you know any more backsliding brethren, let me know, and they'll feel the Prophet's strong arm."

Just then Pierre entered and took his place at the Council table. Joe hastily called the meeting to order and proceeded with routine business.

There were no fixed stars in Zion's firmament. The Apostolic succession of the Mormon hierarchy had become increasingly varied and elastic. Joe held pragmatic theories regarding the appointment and disposition of his Apostles. Having dispatched to foreign parts those hostile to his latest Revelation, he named proxies—sycophants amenable to his will. Seated at the table to-night, only Hyram, Rigdon and Tunk were of the original Twelve. The others were all new and for the most part ardent supporters of the Prophet's will. With Tunk's loyalty unquestionable, only Rigdon and Behr caused the Prophet any uneasiness, although of late, Fey, once his most loyal supporter, had shown a strong disposition to reserve judgment on, if not to criticize outright, the policies of the Church.

The meeting opened in an atmosphere tense and nervous. Joe sensed an impending storm. Impatiently he hurried through the preliminary mumbo-jumbo. Then bluntly, "Now, will the

Brethren speak their divine thoughts!" The battle-scarred Prophet leaned back in the carved throne chair and waited challengingly.

Behr rose and in a voice stern and uncompromising delivered the first thunderbolt. He warned them of the grave dangers threatening to annihilate all that years of labour and sacrifice had brought them; he reminded them of Missouri; and concluded with words that seemed to be spoken directly to the Prophet:

"We have felt the power of calumny before. It drove us from our first home, and we have not heeded God's warning. Again we have permitted the envy, reproach, and fears of our neighbours—partially justified—to strike at us. Unless we mend our ways, unless we live righteously in the sight of our God, we shall again be driven out of our homes, hounded and persecuted for our pride and arrogance, for our unbridled—"

"Brother Behr," Joe leaned forward, interrupting insolently, "are you confessing or accusing?"

"I am confessing delay in accusing you, Brother Joseph!"

The lines of Joe's mocking face deepened as murmurs of indignation ran through the restive circle. "And who is next to tell us how to run the Church?"

Rigdon rose. White, ill, his eyes like two burning coals in a bed of ashes, he seemed, in the scholarly dignity of his bearing, an alien to this motley assortment of uneducated, uncultivated ecclesiastics gathered about the table. There was something terribly compelling in the stark, inexorable purpose, the sheer intellectual intensity, of Sidney Rigdon. He always commanded attention, but to-night even Joe, sullen and fretful, followed every word of Sidney's clear-eyed, impassioned plea to the Twelve to awake from their insensate indifference—to put an ear to the ground—to listen to the approach of the enemy. He reviewed concisely and simply their mistakes as political, social, moral leaders. He pleaded for tolerance and kindness towards their neighbours. "After all, remember we are Christians!" The cry came from a contracted throat.

Not a man stirred. All followed intently the brilliant, logical, earnest plea of the man who was singing his swan song—who was making a last heroic effort to humanize the monstrosity born of his own dreams and mistaken ambitions. It was the last flaming fire to rise from the smouldering bitterness of Rigdon's crushed spirit. In a gentler voice, he continued:

"Let us cleanse our personal lives of their sins of the flesh that we may stand naked and unashamed before God and man. Let us look within our own hearts for the solution of our difficulties."

He sat down in a silence rich with the echo of his words—a

little space of time pregnant with possibilities. In that moment every man was held captive under the spell of their militant scholar-Apostle's appeal to reason. The right gesture, the right word, could yet save Zion. But in that infinitesimal fraction of a minute the vacillating Prophet caught the eye of Pierre Fey. He saw in the Frenchman's face a glowing light—tribute to Rigdon's strength, courage, insight. Instantly the petulant, jealous egotism of the Prophet flared. Impulsively he jumped to his feet and hurled words of vitriol at the astounded Apostles.

"If Brother Sidney doesn't like our Religion, our way of serving the Lord, he can get out." A shock of recoil circled the table, but Joe, beside himself with rage, resentment, fear, rushed on: "I suppose our learned Brother refers to outside opposition to certain Revelations regarding our domestic arrangements. My answer is, let the heathen rage! What we do here is our own business! We are answerable to no one—and that means you, Sidney Rigdon!"

The two men glared at each other. Then Sidney in a quiet, tired voice asked, "Does that mean you are openly advocating polygamy in the name of our Church?"

The circle leaned tensely forward. This was the first time the secret Revelation had been frankly named.

"Depends on what you mean by 'openly.' "

"My God! Do you know what this means?" Rigdon, stricken mortally, gazed at the insolent Prophet in horror.

Behr jumped to his feet. "Smith, you're crazy! You can't mean this. It is vile enough to live a sinful, lecherous life, to bring pain and shame to once happy homes, but to justify the sin by religion—you can't! If you do this thing, you will end on the gallows, and our Church will be vilified throughout the world!"

Joe, adamant, responded sulkily, "I've faced persecution before. There've been other Revelations that brought opposition. Who are you to judge of God's divine will?"

From the welter of the ensuing pandemonium two facts emerged clear—that Joe had taught the Revelation to some of his Apostles, who were secretly practising it, and that the Prophet had no idea of making it public, even to his own people, until God informed him that they were ready to receive it.

"Have you followed this Revelation?" Behr's blunt question, hurled at him, found the Prophet unprepared, but after a perceptible hesitation he said hotly:

"I refuse to answer such a question. You forget who I am!"

Behr, livid with anger, roared at him: "We know the answer. The world suspects what we have long sorrowfully acknowledged, Joe Smith. Your sinful life has brought shame and reproach upon our great Faith. From now on the decent Mor-

mons must turn elsewhere for divine guidance. You have forfeited your leadership! Apostles, where do you stand?"

He turned to the dumb, terrified group with a wide gesture of appeal. Fey, who had remained significantly silent throughout the evening, rose, and in his most conciliatory manner addressed the confused men about the table:

"It is suicide for us to divide our ranks now. It is surely suicide for the Prophet to announce his Revelation. Such a course would only invite ruin and bring horrible suffering upon innocent people. In the interests of our city, our religion, our lives, let us wait until our feelings have cooled. We must maintain absolute secrecy regarding all that has happened this night." He paused, looking directly at Joe. "Let us adjourn now to rest—and pray. Perhaps divine guidance will come in the night."

It was nearly midnight. In relief, all, including the Prophet, concurred in Fey's suggestion, and shortly the Twelve filed out of the dark, chilly Temple. A gale had risen, whipping the rain into driving sheets that lashed the walls of the mighty edifice of the Church of Zion. From far below, the angry Mississippi sent up a roaring protest that rose above the noises of wind and rain. As the Apostles, cowering against the storm, drew their coats closer and braced themselves against the deluge, three men emerged out of the shadows of the many-columned portico and approached the Prophet.

One read a warrant, issued by the Governor of Illinois, arresting Joseph Smith for instigating the murder of the Governor of Missouri.

Chapter Forty-seven

THE PROPHET DID NOT GO TO JAIL WHILE UNDER ARREST ; HE SLEPT comfortably in his own great bed in the Palace. The officers who served the papers slumbered peacefully in the adjacent guest rooms. The following morning Joe tested Nauvoo's unique charter privileges. He had himself released on a writ of *habeas corpus* in his own municipal court, and was later exonerated of all guilt. This unprecedented assertion of local authority against that of the Governor started a year's battle in which Joe skirmished and manœuvred against process-servers. His flagrant disregard of state authority angered and cemented the "Gentile" forces opposing Nauvoo. Faced with hostility from without, the belligerent Mormons bridled their rebellion and, following Pierre's Machiavellian stratagems, held their peace in the hope that the shadow of persecution, again hovering over their Church, might quiet their leaders to a more temperate mood.

The Prophet was not unaware of the precarious path he trod. The cumulative force of Susa's flight, Annette's laughter, the Apostles' denunciation, the Missouri charge, had grown into a burden that lay like an incubus on his harassed life. Not even in the arms of his Heavenly Wives did he escape the fear of imminent betrayal. A vast dread of inevitable persecution, a premonition of disaster, envenomed his hours and he became moody, depressed, morbidly resentful. The rude, boisterous humour, the irresponsible buoyancy of spirit, the cavalier manner came rarely now and inevitably preceded dark excesses of diabolical ruthlessness against his enemies. He swung from reckless, swaggering defiance to subdued, melancholy brooding, which gave rise to the opinion among many that the Prophet was more mad than bad.

Meanwhile Nauvoo gathered her forces to protect her own. Even Rigdon and Behr stifled their fears to help fortify their position against the threats of irate neighbours. Joe secreted himself much of the following year, and during his absence all breathed more freely as they strengthened their programme of conciliation.

Apostles Blackwell and Sayer landed in Nauvoo, unannounced, in the early spring of 1843. Fey and Rigdon persuaded them to delay action—regardless of their provocation—for the good of the many. Sidney, studying the sensitive, pain-lined face of young Blackwell, seemed to see an old picture of himself.

He urged gently : "We have so much more than our own lives and principles at stake. Fifty thousand souls—most of them good, simple people—trust the Faith to which we are pledged. Let us save them their Religion."

"But the false Prophet—what will you do with him?"

"If the Lord doesn't remove him, we must face that problem later. Just now we are sitting on a volcano. Let us move gently. Bidé your time; go to New Orleans; try to find Susa."

Timothy boarded the next boat and with sorrowing, anxious heart was borne south on a steamer that just a month before had carried him to Nauvoo, his spirit quickened by the thought of reunion with his beloved. In the weeks that followed he spent long hours looking for his Susa, trailing faint clues that took him into the dives of river towns. His soul sickened with what he saw and died a little with each recurrent disappointment, until, utterly weary and broken from the torture gnawing at his mind, he returned, a silent ghost, whose eyes haunted his sister Alice.

Timothy's only solace came in the hours spent with his small son, Ted. The boy, now six, had grown strong and happy under Sister Emma's care. Timothy felt a double gratitude to Emma: she had lost her own child in her compassionate care of his frail, lonely wife, Audrey, and she had faithfully kept her promise, whispered to the dying woman, to care for her little child. Each afternoon Emma brought her own boy to play with Ted, and Brother Timothy often sought her out to talk quietly of things of their early life—the far-away, lost part, which had nothing to do with Mormons or anti-Mormons.

One summer afternoon while their children played on the beach along the river, Emma drew from Timothy part of the story of his despair. He was careful not to implicate anyone: "I suppose she was lonely—driven mad by the strangeness."

"What was she like—if it doesn't hurt you to talk of her?"

"Like a flower—a dark glowing rose. She was all eyes—a child. . . . She always wore a little shawl that framed her face—"

Emma interrupted him: "When did she go away?" At the mention of a shawl, something in Emma's brain clicked—a memory, curiously haunting, of a child's voice crying, "You are good—" and then of a slight figure running away, disappearing over the hill as if in terror. "Do you remember?" Emma pushed Timothy for an answer.

"Last October—the fifth, Alice tells me. Why do you ask?" He looked at her with hope, pathetic in its eagerness.

"Out of sympathy," she said gently. "It is terrible . . . I wish we could find her. We must never stop trying."

Timothy, his eyes following the southward flow of the river, spoke despairingly: "Something tells me I shall never see her again."

Emma's heart bled as she looked upon his suffering. She wondered . . . and a new-old fear stirred in her. . . .

The Prophet chose to ignore the breach of discipline in the unauthorized return of his two missionaries. He avoided them as they did him. Through Rigdon's influence both were assigned to teaching posts in the university—one institution not likely just now to engage the Prophet's attention.

Following his arrest, Joe revived the secret order of the Sons of Dan. Limiting the "trusted" to the most reckless and daring, he tried to bludgeon his enemies into submission. Ugly terrors here, as in Missouri, lifted their heads—plundering, burning, sinister threats pinned to doors of apostate homes, mysterious abductions, nocturnal raids on near-by settlements. . . . The Mormons disclaimed any knowledge of or responsibility for the depredations and general lawlessness inflicting the once peaceful countryside, but the enemies of the Church noted with alarm that the atrocities bore a curious resemblance to those charged to the Mormons by the irate Missourians.

Out of the welter of charges and counter-charges, one fact loomed clear—the Sons of Dan were determined to purge Nauvoo of its foes, whether spies from without or agitators from within the Church. One of the most ingenious of their methods was known as "whittling." Under Tunk's direct supervision, vigilantes patrolled the streets and alleys of the city, ferreting out suspects and trailing them assiduously, the while whittling a stick with a large and sinister bowie knife. Every "undesirable" found himself relentlessly shadowed by a pair of these husky, threatening desperadoes, who padded along behind him ceaselessly whittling. They walked when he walked; they stopped when he stopped. They never spoke and their whittling never ceased. Few there were with fortitude sufficient to endure the strain. Most of the victims fled the city.

"Keep your eyes and ears open; see everything, hear everything, and report to this here office," Hezekiah admonished his henchmen. "And don't neglect the serpents amongst our own—there's plenty of 'em in ambush—and some of 'em wear skirts!"

One day not long after this injunction a pair of whittlers forcibly led a frightened girl up the back stairs and into the *Positively No Admittance* office of the Prophet. Joe and Hezekiah, their feet on the table, sat talking of various and sundry matters.

"Holy Jumping Jesus! What hev ye done?" Tunk's beady eyes popped open and the Prophet jumped to his feet angrily. The whittlers stood sore amazed.

"It's this here book." One of the men handed Hezekiah a small brown copy-book. "She writes in it. Read it. We got the goods on her all right."

"Do you know who this is?" Tunk shouted at the clumsy man in a voice shrill with anger. "This is Nancy Rigdon—Apostle Sidney's daughter. Get out of here, you fools!"

The whittlers, in spite of their chagrin, stood their ground.

"Anyway, read the book—it's seditious, I say. We've been trailing her a week. What's she doin' on the bluff there alone every day, I'd like to know. You'd better read the book," the spokesman reiterated as they left the office.

Neither Nancy nor Joe had spoken. As Hezekiah turned to the girl with a smirking, nervous apology, Joe interrupted: "Leave this to me—I'll explain to the Sister."

As he waited, Tunk reluctantly left the room. Nancy fearfully watched him go, then darted for the book, but Joe's hand reached it first.

"Not so hasty! What have we here—poetry?" He opened the small volume, turned the pages casually, and began to read.

"Don't look at it, please. It's mine. Give it back to me." She made as if to snatch it.

"Now—now—there's no hurry. Why do you treasure it so? Is there something here to hide—some confession perhaps?"

Joe looked at Nancy more closely. He had not seen her for months, and she had grown up the last year—a feminine version of Sidney, slight, intense, the same haughty lift of the head, the same defiant spirit.

He opened the book and began to read aloud. The girl leaped at him, grasping desperately at the book. Joe, laughing at her futile efforts, put the book behind him, and grasping the girl with his free arm, pinioned her against his body. In anger her fists clenched and she beat upon his chest, crying, "It's mine! You can't read it! You're a thief!"

Joe was enjoying himself. Under pretext of restraining her, he drew the girl closer and holding her head forced back on his arm, kissed her—kissed her to his complete satisfaction—then released her.

"Now that may teach you womanly obedience and submission to your elders. Here's your copy-book. Start a fresh idea: 'The Prophet gets what he wants. I, Nancy Rigdon, will be more respectful of his commands.' "

He handed her the book, expecting her to snatch it—to rage and weep. But the girl, pale and defiant, her tall, slender figure taut with determination, surveyed him with a look of vast loathing, as she spoke coolly:

"I have changed my mind about the book. It is my diary. Read it!"

Amused, Joe began to read:

"Went to the Temple Grove with father to-day—the Fool preached the most terrible sermon I ever heard and ranted and raved and tossed his red hair about in a most disgusting manner! —I could feel father cringe at such unchristian conduct and such silly talk! Why are we here in this terrible place? I know father is sincere and good, but why does he endure this idiot who calls

himself a Prophet? I'm almost glad mother has been taken to heaven, and I give thanks that David and Judy have escaped. I pray for two things—that father and I may leave this hell on earth and that God will punish the false Prophet, who has brought so much misery to good people. To-day, Sister Annette told me the true story of Susa Owen—”

Joe closed the book, his face contorted from the lashings the words inflicted.

“Give it back to me now—I'm going.”

“Yes, go. . . . But the book must be destroyed. You are a dangerous young girl. I think you may have one of your prayers answered shortly.” His white face twitched so pitifully that the girl felt a brief regret.

Joe continued: “I'll tell you a secret—a real secret to write in your diary—a secret known only to your father and me. Sidney Rigdon endures the ‘Fool’ because he's a thief—a thief, do you hear? I could ruin him to-morrow if I liked. Now go—get out of here—I don't ever want to see you again!”

A week later on a bright Sunday in early April Apostle Rigdon was read out of the Church of Mormon. Standing on the Temple throne, his resonant, dramatic voice modulated with the right mixture of regret and righteous indignation, the Prophet “expels Sidney Rigdon for ever from the ranks of our Chosen, because of treacherous and disloyal conduct, for which charges we hold documentary evidence. Said Rigdon, accused and urged to defend himself, confesses his guilt by his silence. His name and those of his family are herewith for ever stricken from our lists. May God have mercy on their souls!”

Sidney and Nancy were not present to hear their excommunication. While the vengeful words flew into the crowded audience, they were hiding in Springfield, whither they had fled to escape the threats of the Sons of Dan.

Sidney had made no fight. He knew that Nancy innocently had only hastened the inevitable. Her journal, so painful to the Prophet's vanity and so damaging to his policies, became the evidence used by Joe to insure the quick withdrawal of the man he envied and feared. With the sword of Damocles over his head, Sidney had fought for years to maintain his power and place in the system he had moulded. He had endured insult, disgust, danger, hoping against odds that Fate would justify his life's ambition, yield him the opportunity to create something permanent from the tottering structure Joe had erected from his vision. Now, his wife dead, his son David lost to him, Nancy and the dim hope that the Church might yet be saved were all that were left. When Nancy sobbed out her story of what had happened in Joe's office, Sidney knew he was finished. Immediately he made ready to depart.

Emma helped them in their flight. She packed the books and pictures, and sent them to a Boston address. She even travelled with them part of the way, forcing upon Nancy sufficient money to carry them on east.

“I have enough for myself. You’ll need this——”

“Oh, Emma, you are a good woman. I don’t see how——” Nancy checked herself, unwilling to hurt Emma with the questions involuntarily leaping into her mind. But Emma understood.

“It’s all right, Nancy. Do not worry. I shall find a way.”

“Good-bye, Emma. God bless you——” Nancy’s eyes filled with tears as she turned away and stepped into the carriage.

“Good-bye, Emma. I am grateful for everything.”

“Good-bye, Sidney. Take care of Nancy; I shall watch David and Judy and write you. I know they’ll be happy together and that David will go far in his profession.”

Sidney, pale, haggard, ill, his head bowed with the great disappointment, took his place in the carriage beside Nancy, and together they drove down the narrow road leading to Springfield. Emma watched them until the carriage was lost to view in a cloud of yellow dust. . . .

After a long, bitterly waged battle contesting the legality of Missouri’s attempt to extradite the Prophet, the Mormons secured the support of the Congressional candidates from their district. With this support the right of Nauvoo courts to hear all cases involving citizens of the city would be undoubtedly assured. His immunity to arrest thus guaranteed, Joe felt at last free to walk unguarded and unmolested through his own streets!

The final exoneration of the Prophet was celebrated with a great fanfare early in 1844. The Legion passed in review, bands played, a great barbecue fed the exultant people, and Joe thundered mightily from the pulpit in the grove.

At the close of the celebration, in an exultant mood over his victory, Prophet Joseph Smith, erstwhile water-witch, peeker, and diviner, now Mayor of Nauvoo, President of the University of Nauvoo, General of the Nauvoo Legion, and Prophet of Zion, announced his candidacy for the Presidency of the United States.

Chapter Forty-eight

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE *TIRES AND SEASONS* CARRIED ON ITS FRONT page the announcement—

For President,
GENERAL JOSEPH SMITH,
Nauvoo, Illinois.

—and a long editorial asking, “Whom shall the Mormons support for President?” with the answer:

“General Joseph Smith. A man of sterling worth and integrity, and of enlarged views; a leader with the vision needed by the country to bring it out of its slough of despond; a pioneer who, tried in the fires of persecution, has emerged as another Moses; an Inspired One who knows the needs of the nation and has the courage to face them; a citizen of the people who has raised himself from the humbleness of a log cabin to stand at the head of a large, intelligent, respectable, and increasing society, and whose experience has rendered him in every way adequate to the onerous duty; the Prophet whose name is honoured throughout the world—

For President,
GENERAL JOSEPH SMITH,
Nauvoo, Illinois.”

Seemingly the Holy One’s announcement of his candidacy for the highest honour his country could bestow sprang full-fledged from his Jovian head. Actually it escaped quite unwittingly from the head of Pierre Fey. Only the day before the celebration of Joe’s victory, Pierre sat in the office of the Prophet, who, just returned from Springfield, exulted in his triumph for the Nauvoo courts.

“Now we’ll show the damned mobocrats where we stand! Our courts are supreme, our army is unbeatable! To hell with Missouri!”

Pierre retorted impatiently: “You’ll find out where you stand when a real issue arises. Don’t be too sure of yourself. After all, you’re not the President of the United States——”

“Not yet—but why not—soon?”

Joe’s eyes gleamed. Pierre left the office in disgust, but the Prophet sat on. Dreams of a new kind of grandeur expanded and glowed iridescently in his volatile, inflammable imagination. Before he slept that night, he marched triumphantly across the country at the head of a shouting army and entered the Capitol amid a tumult of wildly adoring men and beautiful—very

beautiful—women. Irresistibly handsome in all his Legion glory as General Smith, Joe saw himself bowing graciously to the adulatory multitudes. He entered the White House acclaimed by all the land as America's most dashing, most popular, most brilliant President-elect!

The dream, abetted by the legal vindication of Nauvoo's autocracy, intoxicated—lifted him clear of the despairing mood that had pursued him the last year—and he grasped at its vision eagerly, letting it carry him exuberantly through the next day's ceremonies, letting it dictate the very words of his announcement.

To facilitate and professionalize his campaign, Joe sent to Springfield for an old crony, Fred Runyan, a canny politician out of favour with his party for the moment. Runyan came to Nauvoo as the Prophet's secretary. Out of his vast experience he quickly formulated a platform which appealed ostensibly to the undiscerning masses, but which contained enough sound doctrine to attract even the critical. Joe adopted Runyan's platform *in toto*. Five hundred of Nauvoo's most persuasive orators were commandeered to stump the country. A week's intensive instruction prepared them for their task:

“Talk these six points, and only these: prison reform, abolition of capital punishment, economy, abolition of slavery, reduction of congressmen by two-thirds, and the creation of a national banking system.”

When the five hundred had conned their lessons well, they went forth, their Prophet's final injunction ringing in their ears:

“Don't talk religion—this is a political campaign. Make me President, and I'll tell the world what it needs to know about Mormonism!”

Five hundred stump speakers carried their leader's political gospel into every city, town, and hamlet in the land. In large auditoriums, by country cross-roads, on village greens, five hundred throats shouted to gaping audiences—

“I give you for President of these United States, General Joseph Smith—the man of the people!—not a Southern slave-holder with Yankee views, not a Northerner with Southern sympathies, but an all-round American ready to wield the arm of justice for every man, woman and child in this great country!”

Joe's personal utterances, deftly prepared by Runyan, found their way into every newspaper of importance in the land. Many readers, impressed by the glamorous, pioneering colour of the young Prophet—Joe was now thirty-eight—boosted his campaign by according his views consideration and talking wonderingly of the young Evangelist's impassioned pleas for reform.

In the interest of his campaign Joe denuded Nauvoo of its

strength. From the Legion, the Sons of Dan, the Council of Twelve, he sent forth his most eloquent exhorters to make him President of the United States. During that spring he knew many lonely hours—hours when he felt the need of his old comrades, Tunk, Armstrong, Piatt, Brigham Young, his brother Hyram. . . . But he escaped this mood in long sessions with Runyan, during which the two plotted new lines of attack and ground out fresh material for the press.

Caleb, cannily aware of his master's increased importance, was perhaps the Prophet's most comforting intimate at this time. Alone with this faithful servant, Joe lapsed into the gamin, the boy peeker who looked over the panorama of his life with the feeling of an actor for its colour and drama. He dropped all pretence and talked as one rogue to another.

"It's a matter of luck, Caleb. Some have it—some don't. I've got it, that's all. Now, when we get to the White House——"

Thus alone in his retreat with Caleb, who was bathing his tired feet, the Prophet thought out loud, without restraint or bravado.

"Yes, sir, Gen'l, you'se got de luck all right, but I does wish I hadn't lost that there peek-stone. Them Missourians was at you the very next day after it fell in the river, and I ain't felt safe since."

Joe smiled, recalling Caleb's tragic lamentation when, on a fishing jaunt, the negro had accidentally dropped the mysterious peek-stone into the Mississippi, but he answered seriously, "You hold on to the rabbit's foot anyhow. We need all our luck now."

"We sure does! I sez all the 'chantments I knows, but I regrets the day we lost dat stone . . ."

The old man mumbled as he left the room, and Joe turned to the instruction of his latest Heavenly Bride, the delectable young wife of his newest apostle, Lyman Fairweather.

To the feminine strategists in Nauvoo, the lure of imminent White House privileges provided a fresh spurt to their interest in the Prophet. All through the spring of 1844 he found pretty, modestly willing novitiates. Often he himself was the pursued rather than the pursuer. The sensation was not unpleasant, especially after so many rebuffs. Although limits were now placed on his time and strength, he did not shirk his part in promoting the domestic system conjured from out his fecund mind.

As he whiled away a May afternoon with Mathilda Fairweather, her husband, ably assisting the Prophet's Presidential campaign, was declaring before a large audience in Paducah, Kentucky:

"I give you for President that fine, sterling, upright gentleman—General Joseph Smith!"

Chapter Forty-nine

SIDNEY RIGDON'S EXPULSION MARKED A DEFINITE BREAK IN the Mormon ranks. Although the Opposition did not publish its defection, the members quietly withdrew and secretly gathered their forces for battle. With Joe's vigilantes scattered about the country to harangue for his candidacy, it was not difficult for them to perfect their plans. Under cover of the mighty chorus the Opposition leaders—Behr, Fey, Blackwell, and Sayer—made ready for their first attack on the madman threatening to sweep them and their world to disaster. They found an amazing response to their programme of purification. The better class of Mormons, simple, serious moral people, were shocked by the Prophet's increasing excesses. Those who could had apostatized and returned to their old homes and churches; others, continuing firm in their loyalty to the Golden Plates, or bound to Nauvoo by virtue of their investments in the city's enterprises, became fearful for their safety and security. These responded quickly to the reforms for which the Opposition stood.

To Joe's indiscriminate followers Rigdon's refusal to contest his summary dismissal proved his guilt, but many of the loyal Mormons suspected foul play. The Opposition, by spreading the true version of Joe's cruelty to his oldest and most intelligent Apostle, fanned the rapidly accumulating fires of rebellion. By June they had secured five hundred names pledged to support them with purse and scrip in the removal of the Prophet from his place as leader of the Church of Mormon.

Much pain attended this alignment. Homes were disrupted—old friends alienated. Heart-breaking defection blighted lives that had followed with dog-like devotion the light held out to them by a man of whom they would believe no evil—to whom they continued to look for divinity in spite of the documentary evidence proving his fallibility.

Alice Blackwell Bonetti faced an entirely different problem. When she had given the whole truth to her brother, she ended her story sadly: "My punishment is that I can never tell my husband. He so loves this boy! If he knew the child were not his—"

"But you must tell him," Tim said gently, "for two reasons: it is right you should—you can't live a good life with the sin of deception on your heart; and we must make an affidavit of your statement in order to substantiate our charges."

"No!" Alice's eyes opened wide with horror. "To declare my shame to the world? How can you, my brother, ask such a thing?"

"Alice, you are thinking only of yourself." Painfully, patiently, he explained to her the necessity of sworn evidence from reliable people. "Your name, your unquestioned integrity, will make your evidence sufficient. And the note to Susa—dear God! Don't you see how I hate to reveal that story? But how else can we stop this devil who even now threatens to control our country? My dear sister, face it bravely. When we have done our duty, I will take you away—back to Canada if you wish it."

So Alice Blackwell told her husband, but Bonetti loved his wife and little Benito, and stayed with them. He was one of the witnesses to Alice's sworn statement, which proved to be the most conclusive evidence in the case of the Opposition against Joe.

Annette Sayer was then prevailed upon to submit her testimony. Others came forward until there was a mass of evidence amply sufficient to substantiate their case in any fair court.

The Opposition had secured from St. Louis a printing press, type, paper, and ink. These, sedulously guarded, were set up under Sayer's direction in the Bonetti home—in the very room from which Susa had fled. The carved walnut chest was used to store the fresh white paper soon to be turned into her instrument for revenge.

Through the nights of late May and early June the Opposition worked frantically, writing, assembling materials, setting type, rushing the printing. All must be in readiness for June the nineteenth! June 19, June 19, June 19—feverishly to the rhythm of these two words they worked towards the day set for their coup.

Shortly after midnight of the eighteenth the group, haggard from loss of sleep, ceased their labours. All was in readiness! Behr, old and grey, spoke wearily: "Go home, men, and sleep the sleep of the just. This underground work is ended. Tomorrow we come out into the open to make a clean fight for the right!"

Chapter Fifty

UPON A SLEEPING NAUVOO CAME THE SLOW DAWN OF JUNE 19, 1844, still and hot. Long before the burning sun crept over the rim of the dewless prairie, the faintly burnished yellow sky proclaimed another breathless, torrid day. While the midnight toilers of the Opposition, drugged with weariness, slept on in their little houses until the sun was well into the sky, the Prophet, restless, eager to be at the celebration of his as well as the country's independence, sprang from his bed and to the open window. The river far below gleamed dully like a sluggish, giant serpent, slowly twisting its way to the south. The shrubbery and trees along the banks stood listless. Not a breath of air stirred their dusty green foliage. Joe drew back into the shadowy coolness of his high-ceilinged room, sighing:

"God! Another scorcher!"

He began making a careful toilet; he bathed in the tub of water prepared the night before, shaved and powdered his flushed face, and before the small, swinging mirror examined himself, touching his skin, his neck, the dark pockets under the restless, greenish eyes.

"Need exercise—mustn't get soft."

His eyes brightened as he proudly combed the mass of flamboyant red hair, letting its wavy length drape a dramatic frame across his retreating brow. He struck a pose, his head poised as if condescendingly waiting for the applauding multitude to grow quiet. That was good—quite Presidential. Then he gave his attention to his body and again grew critical. His flabby waist and flanks did not please him.

"I must get the weight down." The muscles lay flaccid under his hand. "Got to take up wrestling again. Those damned women are to blame! The strongest man in the land—a President to grapple with the cleverest!"

As he imagined the headline, a painful memory of a scene in Sister Annette's parlour flashed into his mind, obliterating pleasanter sensations.

"God! She laughed at me—laughed!"

Angrily he plunged into his clothes, further annoyed to find his dress uniform now too tight for comfort. But he was again solaced when in the full regalia of General Smith—gold braid and epaulets, scabbard and blade, boots and spurs—he stood before the long mirror in the now daylit room and surveyed his inimitable grandeur. The picture of what the world saw pleased him mightily. In truth, he was the American Napoleon! His eyes noted this comparison with satisfaction. He was ready to take Washington—the world might come later! Then,

remembering that Presidents wore no uniforms, he felt disappointment. Civilian dress was dull, but perhaps all that could be changed—perhaps . . .

While his mind dreamed into the future of a Washington acclaimed the "City of Joseph the Great," the Prophet placed the final touches on his toilet, some fresh powder on his face, a few drops of Cologne—gift of Moya Albright, his last Heavenly Wife but one—made out his programme for the celebration, and sallied forth to meet the day.

In the white panelled dining-room Joe and Emma breakfasted. In spite of his excitement, the Prophet ate voraciously—porridge, bacon and eggs, fried mush, and a stack of fluffy buckwheat cakes. After breakfast his little son ran into the room.

Peter, just now four, was a small, sickly child born in the midst of that first terrible year at Nauvoo. Emma had guarded him from one illness to another. The last-born child had died in infancy. Although the only one of his children to survive, Joe had little affection for Peter, whom he seldom saw, but this morning the child, awed by the glittering red uniform, stared in naïve admiration at his giant father. Flattered, Joe swung the lad to his shoulder.

"How about it, Peter? Want to go to the parade?"

"Joe, he can't. The heat will make him ill!"

But Emma's alarm was ridden down, not by Joe's stubborn determination, but by the little boy's excited pleading: "Please! I want to ride on father's horse!"

His tiny flushed face, peering down at her from the man's shoulder, touched the mother's heart. After all, the boy had few memories of a father. Stifling her misgivings, she dressed the quivering, jubilant lad in his black velvet, lace-trimmed suit and surrendered him reluctantly.

"Have Caleb watch him carefully and keep him in the shade. Sally will call for him at the reviewing stand exactly at twelve." She followed them to the stables and when Joe was mounted, lifted the happy child into his father's arms, admonishing anxiously as they rode away: "Be sure to keep his head covered from the sun!" . . .

The Prophet found the streets of Nauvoo filled with mobs of milling people in holiday spirit bent upon a full enjoyment of the double-starred holiday. The city's celebrations had great fame. It was only necessary to announce one to fill the steamers and to pack the roads with great crowds from St. Louis, Burlington, Quincy, Carthage, and the innumerable mushroom villages dotting the prairies. They would watch the Legion parade, listen to the Nauvoo band, eat the food the city freely distributed, walk the streets admiring the fresh red-brick houses and public buildings, and tour the Prophet's Palace and the Temple of God

on the hill. In the evening and far into the night they would dance to the music of Nauvoo's entertainers, and early in the morning they would depart, marvelling at the opulence and hospitality of "them crazy Mormons." Rumours of bizarre moral practices but increased the flood of visitors, many curious, some frankly antagonistic.

As Joe rode through the crowded streets this morning, he was made aware of a certain irresponsible element in the masses surging about him. Although the chorus of "Hail! Brother Joseph!"—"Long live the Prophet"—followed him, there were many who stood staring up at him, evincing no enthusiasm. These must be won over! Each of those sullen, wooden faces meant a vote—just wait until he got them in the Grove! Phrases from the speech he had carefully rehearsed under Runyan's tutelage ran through his mind as he made his triumphal passage to the parade grounds.

Peter, looking like a frail boy-doll clutching the pommel of the saddle, drew much attention. Joe heard murmurs of animated, pleased comment from all sides. The women especially were touched by the picture of the handsome Prophet on a black charger with his small son—his son—in his arms. The Prophet had a flash of inspiration. He would appear in the parade with Peter! He would review his troops with the wistful, appealing little boy held in his arms. . . . Symbols of innocence and true fatherhood!

Instantly Joe fell into the rôle and was soon enacting it with feeling. A genuine fondness possessed him as he held the flushed, excited lad with a proud paternal concern. The boy responded with such affectionate trust that Joe was moved. "Nice kid," he thought, "too bad he's sick. I'm going to pay more attention to him after this."

At eleven the ceremonies began. The trumpets sounded and General Smith, with Peter before him in the saddle, rode forward with his staff of four aides-de-camp to the strain of martial music. Following came the Honour Guard—twenty beautiful women dressed in black velvet habits, their large hats trailing white plumes. Close behind these rode the General's guard of fifty. This contingent manoeuvred picturesquely about the field, then drew up in formation to assist the General in his review of the troops, which now moved up and down the field, twenty companies strong. The exact military discipline, the intricate evolutions, the spirited morale, made the parade of Nauvoo's Legion a stirring sight—dignified, grand, imposing. . . . Although the spectacle provoked fear in certain discerning visitors, it inevitably aroused tumultuous approval from the thousands packed into the galleries—the grown-up children who spontaneously shouted their approbation of a good show.

But to-day the Prophet's ear strained to catch the exact volume of applause which rolled in waves across the large bare field baking under the torrid rays of an early summer sun. Satisfied, he straightened and gave himself up to the pleasure of watching his men—two thousand of them—his creatures, each an instrument for protection or vengeance.

The sun, mounting with relentless brazenness into a dry, yellow sky, beat down mercilessly upon the spectacle. The onlookers fanned themselves, mopped their perspiring faces, cast aside their coats, vests, cravats, but the actors sweated through their dramatic manœuvres without relief. Little Peter leaned limp against his father's protecting chest. The women of the Honour Guard sweltered heroically in their stifling velvet habits. A wave of tremendous relief swept over the performing figures as amid the last surge of applause the Prophet led off the field. . . .

Joe rode to the grandstand and anxiously handed the feverish Peter to Caleb. "Give him to Sally Eicher and tell her to hurry home."

In that moment he was conscious of something ominous in the long galleries. The applause had died abruptly as if a hand had passed through the ranks, closing each throat in turn. Then, he saw newspapers being passed quickly among the crowds and opening like flashing mirrors in the sun. As far as his eye could travel, the papers were held before faces that a moment before had looked applaudingly upon him. A terrible, crashing silence descended upon the field as the twenty thousand spectators, with eyes riveted upon the sensational sheet mysteriously placed in their hands, gave their first shocked attention to its shouting headlines. . . .

As the dreadful silence deepened into curiously threatening undertones, panic seized the redoubtable General. A cold shiver ran over his perspiring body. Calling to Caleb, he commanded, "Get me one of those papers—quick!"

Dazedly the faithful negro released Peter and hurried away in the direction of the spectators just as Hezekiah Tunk, white and breathless, ran towards the Prophet, a paper clutched in his hand.

"Hell's broke loose!" he shouted hoarsely. "Ride like the devil to the office! We'll follow."

Even as he spoke, pandemonium rose from the crowds, who, catching the full import of the significance of the news, burst into startled cries of horror, shame, despair, vengeance. . . . Within a few minutes the thousands were embroiled in a roaring, seething tumult. Sides were taken, people fought! They cursed in delight or in anger! Fierce, ugly epithets flew wildly about! Bitter diatribes against the "filthy Mormons" or the "filthy

slanderers" clashed in mid-air! All was chaos, bestial—a battle without form or direction.

Joe, a terror of foreboding boring deep, hurried to his office, where he found Runyan and a dozen others there before him. He dropped into his chair and read—

THE NAUVOO EXPOSITOR

The Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth.

BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS!!!

As his terrified eyes skimmed the Preamble—repeal of the city's charter, destruction of the Prophet's tyranny in the Church, supremacy of Illinois law over Nauvoo law—his face blanched. Not waiting to read further, he turned a strained, desperate countenance to the alarmed men :

"Where did this come from? Who printed it?"

Silence and a desperate shaking of heads—

"You don't know? God damn you idiots—" Joe, livid with angry fear, turned on Hezekiah: "Tunk, you're responsible for this! What have the Sons of Dan been doing—where are my spies?"

Tunk's beady eyes popped. "They're out making speeches for you. You sent 'em yourself."

He stood his ground, but Joe, insane with terror, roared :

"Get out and find the devils who printed this! Get all the vile sheets—burn 'em! Find that damned printing press and smash it to pieces—before to-night—or—"

A young man, Warner Liggett, burst into the room. Panting frantically, he gasped: "We've found the place—the press—where they came from—"

Joe leaned forward. "Where is it?"

Into the tense silence the boy stammered, "In Apostle Blackwell's house!"

There was a gasp of dismay, but Joe checked it impatiently. "Are you sure? How did you find out?"

"We took Jimmy Ashwell—one of the distributors—to the torture room. It didn't take long, sir."

"Learn anything else?" Joe's face was ashen.

"Apostles Fey—and Behr—and Sayer—"

The boy spoke each name hesitatingly, realizing the blow each gave to the listening group. During the ensuing silence the Prophet paced the room while the others watched him timorously—too frightened to speak. Runyan sat at the desk, carefully studying the paper spread before him. Joe turned to him and asked in raging helplessness :

"What shall we do?"

"Let the people eat," Runyan answered dryly. "I'd send Apostles out to pass sandwiches to the bloodthirsty mob. Let the show proceed!"

Left alone with Runyan, Joe collapsed. Unloosing his stiff collar, he fortified himself with brandy and cursed his enemies with blasphemous emphasis. "I'll have 'em court-martialled—they'll be shot at sunrise—sedition—double-crossing skunks!"

"Better read the paper first—"

Runyan's tone was cold, unfriendly. Joe, hesitating, took up the sheet with repugnance. All bluster died and stark horror crept into his heart as he read the carefully documented exposure of his intimate life—his political machinations, his financial unscrupulousness, his moral turpitude. . . . Joe's heart lost a beat when he saw Alice Blackwell's and Annette Sayer's names signed to sworn statements—when he read:

"It is an authenticated fact that women in foreign lands have been persuaded to journey hither to Nauvoo only to find that the Holy Prophet is a vile seducer. . . . The woman is thunderstruck, faints, recovers and refuses. The Prophet damns her if she rejects. She thinks of the great sacrifice, and of the many thousand miles she has travelled over sea and land that she might save her soul from pending ruin, and replies, 'God's will be done and not mine.' . . . These poor, helpless creatures, far from home and friends, confused and harassed by the sly, wily teachings of this wolf in sheep's clothing, have often succumbed in despair, but sometimes, on discovering the heinous iniquity demanded of them under the garb of sanctity, have lost their reason and fled in terror to we know not what dire fate. . . ."

There followed his note to Susa. Joe's eyes glazed with hate as he read. Where had they got it? For a moment he forgot everything except the old pain—the shame of that dark incident. As he read on to the end, he did not notice Runyan leave the room.

They had the goods on him. He knew the game was up. Through the vituperative pages, Joe saw Pierre's deft, cunning hand at work. When he had finished, but two emotions remained in him—defeat and anger. Although he felt beaten, there burned in his being a blazing desire to get even—to strike out at his enemies—and then to run away—somewhere far away—to start all over again.

In one moment he resigned it all. He was tired of it—finished. The Church, the lands, the adulation, the women, the Power and the Glory—all, all was a burden that hung like a rock on his harassed soul. . . .

He went to the open window. In the streets below people had gathered into groups, reading the hideous white sheet, talking, their nuzzling heads close together, their awkward arms gesticulating vehemently. As he turned back into the room, Caleb entered, his face contorted with fear and desperation.

"Where have you been all this time, Nigger?"

Caleb with effort at last explained in broken phrases: "I—I hesitates to tell you—but I must. I lost de little boy and I'se been everywhere lookin' for him——"

"Lost? You mean you lost Peter?"

"Yes—Miss Sally and me well-nigh gone crazy searchin'. When we did find him, he was in de company of some Carthage folks and mighty sick. Dis is our day o' misery!"

Joe stared blankly, dazed with a new foreboding. "Where is he now?"

"His mother got him. She took him to the hospital."

"What's the matter with him?"

"Doctor Starr say sunstroke. The boy don't know nobody."

Joe felt a thrust of remorse. Just his luck to have that happen to-day. Emma never would forgive him. Why in hell did he have such sickly children anyhow? Not one of the five could weather the storm—four dead and the last one sick! Poor Emma . . .

Into these fretful thoughts Caleb's voice came slow and solemn with warning: "Master Prophet Joe, we'se got to fly from here. Dis town's no place for us. I'se been afraid ever since——"

"Don't be an old fool, Caleb. Go find Runyan and Dooley. Send them here quick."

Real terror in the old man's eyes made Joe considerate, and he let Caleb talk out his misgivings:

"Those folks down there's like mad dogs. They's growlin' and wants blood. I can jest feel 'em at our throats. We'd better run while dere's time, I tells you!"

"Maybe we will—soon. We'll go to where there's luck. But now find Runyan. I'll have to get things ready before we leave."

Partially comforted, Caleb hurried away, while the Prophet returned to his brooding. He never had felt so alone—so in need of counsel. Within the last year he had alienated the stable experienced Mormons who might have served him in this dark hour. Sidney Rigdon, Behr, Sayer, Blackwell—steady, sober friends had he held them—were lost to him. His newer friends were dispersed, campaigning to make him President. Of the old guard, only Tunk, now senile and querulous, remained. Through the long, baking hours of the June midday, the Prophet, his clothes dishevelled, his mop of red hair falling chaotically over his damp forehead, sat alone at his desk, a tired, discouraged man.

Runyan was not to be found. The *Expositor* was the hand-

writing on the wall. Before two o'clock he had departed, bag and baggage, in the direction of Carthage. This report stung Joe into a reckless fury that lost sight of everything save the insult that had broken in upon his day of Glory.

At three, the hour he was to have addressed the crowd in Temple Grove, the Prophet, stripped to the waist, his green eyes bloodshot with drink and rage, belligerently presided over the hurriedly called council:

"You pass these orders for the destruction of the damned presses and my soldiers will do the rest," he roared at the stolid, hesitating men, whose instincts warned against the mad methods reeling from the feverish mind of the infuriated man. In the end, however, the orders were passed. Breathing more quietly, the Prophet continued: "Now your concern in this matter is finished. Scatter through the town. Get the people to the bluff dance pavilion. Go ahead with the supper plans. Act as if nothing has happened. Tell 'em I'm sick in bed—gone home to wait for a Revelation about this pack of lies!" His loose mouth twisted sardonically. "It's your job to show 'em a good time. Make it a glorious celebration—one they'll never forget. I'll take care of this little matter. I'll . . ." and he waved the copy of the orders "to destroy and burn the press that printed the libellous *Expositor*, and to arrest all who offer resistance to such measures."

At dusk General Joseph Smith accompanied the Marshal of Nauvoo with a detachment of deputies from the Legion as they marched through the streets of the city to the Blackwell and Bonetti homes. But the Opposition had been warned and their women and children had fled the city. Six men guarded the Blackwell house. They made a stubborn fight, but went down under the assault of Joe's armed forces. Entering the little house, the servants of the Prophet's law smashed right and left—printing press, type, furniture, pictures, books . . .

But when the devastators would have laid ruthless hands on the old chest in Susa's room, Joe, with a sharp command, retrieved it, pushed it back into a dark corner, and stood a quiet moment looking down on it with something like animal pain in his reddened eyes. The sight of the huge, heavily carved chest evoked a sharp, bitter-sweet memory. Susa, in one of their first meetings, had told him about this chest.

"I was so grateful when Brother Timothy let me bring it to America. When I grow too lonely, I sit and look at it. It carries me back to Wales. In the darkness I can touch it and feel at home again."

Resisting a terrible impulse to fall on the floor and weep, Joe gave the chest an irritated shove and turned back to the attack

upon the Blackwell house. Outside, a great pile had been built and was already crumbling before the flames devouring its inflammable contents.

Indifferently, the avenging Prophet left the burning yard and went into the street. Crowds had already gathered. Suddenly Joe was afraid; he who fed on crowds, who swayed them with his mighty will, wanted to escape. Under cover of darkness, by back streets and short cuts he knew well, Joe Smith, reverting to the moods and fears of the boy peeker escaping an unfriendly gang, scurried towards his home. Hot and breathless, he paused on the crest of the hill leading down to the Palace. From this high point near Susa's Rest Stone he could see on his right the faint blaze to the far East, symbol of his savourless revenge; to his left, in the picnic grove, the glow of torches from the dance pavilion. Through the night air the strains of the music floated from this happy spot, where his friends and enemies danced gaily, careless of the wretchedness of the man who had brought them to the mighty city. He, their host, was to-night excluded; he dared not go among them to lead the quadrille with the prettiest of Nauvoo's fair daughters—to command the orchestra at his whim—to bestow his kingly hospitality upon the thousands who might have stared admiringly upon the illustrious Prophet—"Our next President of these United States!"

From far, far away seemed to come echoes of those imagined words, and from his lips there fell a bitter renunciation:

"I'm through with this damn place—swinish ingratitude—I'll go West—build a real empire where there aren't any heathen traitors to deal with—to the real West—I'll put mountains between me and these dirty skunks . . ."

With a gesture of farewell to Nauvoo, the impregnable Joe went down the hill to his home, the grey stone Palace of God, firm and secure at the edge of the river. Entering quickly by a side door, he encountered Sally Eicher, whose eyes were red and swollen with weeping. Even in his exhausted state, Joe was conscious of the girl's shock at his appearance.

"What's the matter? Where's Sister Emma?"

"At the hospital—with Peter."

"Oh, yes—" Joe dully remembered. "Is the kid really bad?"

"Yes—"

The girl's accusing manner cut the last remaining thread in his ravelling brain, and, beside himself with madness, he shouted, "Good God! Must even you persecute me! Get to my room and pack my valises—then go to the city and have Caleb come at once and bring me the black bag—he knows which one! Now be sharp. . . . Oh, yes, tell Caleb to send Tunk and Hurlbutt here—hurry—there's no time to be lost!"

Shortly after midnight Joe and Caleb pulled away from the private landing just below the Palace. The intense, dry heat of the day had broken; there was promise of a storm. A brisk wind had sprung up from the river and an occasional flash of lightning revealed great masses of cumulous clouds mounting the western sky. Gratefully the men drew the cool air into parched lungs, as with long, heavy strokes they sent their little boat out on the dark stream, headed for the wooded islands near the Iowa side. They steered towards the Prophet's favourite cache. Here many times he had gone in holiday spirit with some congenial crony, knowing always that he would return. But to-night, watching the Illinois shore slowly, steadily recede, he turned to his faithful servant, muttering in a strangely sorrowful voice:

“Say good-bye to Nauvoo, Caleb. We're through with Illinois. Our luck's gone.”

“It's dat peek-stone, Brudder Joseph. Dis here ol' river's gobbled it up.”

Old Caleb's voice was mournful as he plied the oars and the two dark figures moved silently into the broad river.

Chapter Fifty-one

WHILE THE BOAT MADE ITS SWIFT SILENT FLIGHT FROM THE troubulous city, Emma, holding the sleeping Peter in her arms, approached her home. Seated beside Dr. Starr in his two-wheeler, she swayed ever so gently against the man, as with closed grateful eyes she lifted her face to the oncoming storm. Out of the confused welter of the hideous day one hope emerged shining clear—Peter was better—he was alive, resting naturally in her arms.

Lights shone dimly through the lower windows of the Palace. Driving into the court, Dr. Starr drew up the reins, got out and took the weak child in his arms as Emma went ahead to open the kitchen door. The Eicher twins were locking the doors for the night. Sally handed Emma a note, took the child from the doctor, and with her sister left the room, as if anxious to escape questioning. Emma unfolded the soiled page, and, holding it close to the candle, deciphered Joe's rude, childish scrawl:

The events of this unfortunate day leave me no choice but escape. Our persecutors thirst for my blood. I go ahead to the Far West to prepare a new land in a free country. I shall send for you and the faithful. Meanwhile Tunk will apprise you of all plans.

JOE.

P.S.—I hope the boy gets well.

Twice Emma read the postscript, then handed the note to the doctor. He quickly scanned and returned it, his penetrating eyes anxiously studying her inscrutable face.

“What will you do?” he finally asked.

“Nothing. What is there to do?”

“Will you—will you not follow him?”

“No. Whatever happens, I shall stay here.”

There was a long moment of silence in the dim kitchen as each thought deeply, sadly, of things that could not be put into words. With a weary sigh Emma rose and said slowly, “Perhaps it is better—after all. Let him go.” She turned to the man, her eyes clouded with tears as she added softly, “Good night, my friend, and thank you—for many things.”

But Emma soon learned that the matter could not be disposed of so simply. By noon of the following day rumours of Joe's flight had spread, throwing all Nauvoo into a ferment of unrest. His followers were shocked and incredulous that their leader would desert them; his enemies were sullen and resentful that

he had escaped. The city seethed with the confusion of wild speculations and fantastic rumours. The Opposition leaders had opened headquarters in Carthage, where they swore out warrants for the Prophet's arrest on charges of riot and destruction of property. When the deputies returned to Carthage empty-handed, the news of Joe's flight ran like wildfire throughout the state, reviving old grudges and stirring the latent hatreds of the Mormons into flaming retaliation. In many counties public meetings adopted resolutions calling for the eviction of the Mormons from Illinois. At Warsaw, just eighteen miles away, a group of three thousand resolved that "the time has come when Joseph Smith and his miscreant adherents must be surrendered unto the law of Illinois, and if not surrendered, a war of extermination must be waged upon the unclean, unlawful body."

The story of Nauvoo's unholy celebration, augmented with each repetition, sped with incredible swiftness. Five near-by towns organized vigilantes and raised funds for guns and ammunition; twenty towns called out their militias; Missouri extended sympathy and promised support. Terror ran with lightning swiftness through the countryside, with women seeking the safety of the larger settlements, while their husbands stood ready for battle, either defensive or offensive.

"The Mormons are coming—they have turned the Temple into a fort—they have ten boatloads of ammunition—their army is ready to march—already they are attacking Carthage!"

These were the alarms spread by the fearful and angry anti-Mormons, while in Nauvoo equally absurd canards disturbed the sleep of the terror-stricken inhabitants now bereft of their Prophet:

"Governor Ford has called out the militia and is marching on the city—ten thousand men are descending on Nauvoo to shoot our leaders, destroy our homes, and burn us to the ground—five thousand Missourians have crossed into Quincy—Pierre Fey has betrayed us and escaped to France with a fortune—we are to be exterminated!"

All of this was brought to Emma's door, and now she had no choice but to listen. For years she had turned her back upon the things she could not rectify—since she was powerless to change them, she refused to dwell upon them. She had chosen her bed and she would lie upon it, but was it not sensible to take the more comfortable part of it? She had closed her eyes upon much that she did not wish to see, and since she had lived apart from her husband, his flagrant infidelities had lost their first power to stab her. Although she knew Joe, saw through his pitiful delusions of grandeur with undimmed clarity, she was not prepared for the unexpurgated biography of him printed in the *Expositor*. On

the morning after his flight, as she sat under a maple by the river, she had read the waspish sheet. A numbness, beyond pain, had crept through her veins, leaving her dazed and sodden. "It is better that he go away," she thought, surprised to find herself hoping that he would go quickly and leave her alone for ever. She shrank from the unmitigated tragedy of that list of accusing women: her old friend Alice—no wonder she had lost her; pretty Annette, Nancy Rigdon, Patience Trumbull—these had repulsed him; Susa Owen—that explained Timothy Blackwell's bitterness. As Emma thought of Susa, she remembered the child's words, "You are good," She closed her eyes, murmuring, "I can never be good enough to undo such misery."

Into Emma's long-suffering, severely disciplined heart there sprang a wild irrepressible longing to be free of her burden, to come clean of the whole involved system—to throw off the bondage of Mormonism—to live in the grey stone house with Peter. Letting these thoughts flow through her, she felt lifted out of the despair engendered by the *Expositor's* exposé. Fate had stepped in—she dared not credit Providence with yesterday's climax of her husband's nefarious life—but Fate surely was in it. Joe was going on—out of her life. She was free to stay alone, in peace, beside the great river. She turned gratefully to gaze upon her world, cool and fresh after last night's storm.

The next day Dr. Starr came to her gravely: "I don't like the temper of the city. And the neighbouring towns are arming. It seems serious."

She looked at him fixedly; they saw in each other's eyes ghosts of the past—shades of their terrible exodus from Missouri.

"Is it possible? I did not dream things were so bad as that!"

When the deputies came to arrest the Prophet, they searched the Palace while she sat waiting in the parlour. One of them warned her significantly: "If he valued his life and the lives of others, he would submit to arrest like any honest man!"

Little by little, hour by hour, person by person, her determination to abet Joe's escape was beaten down. It was a bitter surrender. The few hours in which she had dreamed of freedom had shown her how deeply her spirit craved separation from the incompatible network in which she was enmeshed. The way out had seemed clear and good—a new start for Joe, whom loving, she had resigned so that he was dead to her—and peace for herself.

Although she fought against admitting it, by the end of the third day she realized that Joe must be recalled. He must return to his people, who, still trusting him, cried as frightened children whimpering in the dark. There were thousands of them wandering like lost souls through the streets of the waiting city. Tunk had placed Nauvoo under martial law—there was little passing

in or out; trade and commerce stood still. As the heat again mounted, an air of feverish hush like the prelude of a tornado crept over the hill and surrounded Emma's home.

At the close of the third day Emma received a delegation from the Governor beseeching her help in securing the Prophet's surrender to the law. Judge Welden, touched by the woman's poise and beauty, put the case with gentle but firm emphasis:

"If your husband does not surrender willingly, the Governor will be compelled to take him by force. That means bringing out the state militia, and, with feeling running at fever heat, that is dangerous."

"But isn't it equally dangerous to take him to Carthage—to expose him to this feverish feeling of which you speak?"

"On the contrary, it is your husband's only hope of safety. I have heard Governor Ford pledge that General Smith will be accorded state protection." As she still hesitated, the Judge added, "Madam, the safety of the twenty thousand people in this city is at stake. I know you to be a tender-hearted woman. I pray you let us do all possible to prevent an outbreak of hostilities. We promise your husband safe conduct and a fair trial. Won't you help us?"

"Yes—I will do what I can. Give me twenty-four hours, until to-morrow night. I believe he will be ready then."

Early the next morning as the sky took on the reddish glow of a June dawn, Emma's boat began the crossing to Joe's hiding-place. With her were Tunk and Hyram Smith. All were silent as their dark boat glided over the quiet, glistening river, rose-red with the reflection of the growing light. As they neared the well-hidden entry to the Prophet's secret island, the sun, a fiery circle, slid over the Iowa bluff into the sky. Emma, immobile in the prow of the boat, was transfixed with wonder at the beauty all about her. With a little shock she was recalled to herself as the boat entered the harbour and she saw Joe waiting to receive them. The consternation written large upon her husband's face at sight of her roused her from her reverie. Her body grew taut as she faced the task ahead.

"Where are the supplies? The cattle—the mules? Where are the wagons and the men? What does this nonsense mean?"

The questions were hurled at them before they landed, but Emma waited until all were ashore and seated. Then she turned to him and said simply:

"Joe, you are going back with us to give yourself up and fight this thing through."

It was no easy task persuading the stubborn man to renounce the iridescent dreams of freedom which in three days of seclusion with the imaginative Caleb had germinated prodigiously—to persuade him to return to an irksome, care-burdened Nauvoo.

where traitorous devils lurked eager to betray him. For three hours the battle of wills continued. Emma pleaded, beating down her husband's objections one by one. Patiently, with skilful tact and wisdom, she gave him the picture, made him see the suicidal folly of deserting his people.

"But I'm not deserting! I'm merely going on to prepare a way for them out west where—"

"They won't follow you. Already they are calling you coward—deserter. Come back! Finish this trial honestly. Go before your people openly and honestly with your plans for a great western empire. We aren't here to prevent your going—when the time is ripe. But no one would follow you if you sneak away—a hunted man fleeing from the law! Unless you return to Nauvoo to stand by in this hour of greatest need, you will lose your entire following once and for all, and your name will be reviled from one end of the world to the other!"

Joe, dazed, turned helplessly to the men: "Is this true, Hezekiah—Hyram?"

They nodded affirmatively, and Tunk added humbly, "I didn't have the courage to tell you yesterday how bad things really are, but all Sister Emma says is true. Unless you come back, we're lost. There's no one to take your place. We've got no leader."

"Very well—I'll come." He rose dejectedly. "If I'm worth nothing to my own people, I'm worth nothing to myself."

Later, as Caleb loaded his bags reluctantly into the boats, Joe said to Emma grimly, "You're leading me back to be slaughtered. I wonder why I go."

"Remember Missouri, Joe. You are not a coward!"

Chapter Fifty-two

AS WORD OF THE PROPHET'S RETURN SPREAD OVER NAUVOO, THE quaking city again became hopeful. Crowds trooped down the hill to the Palace, begging for a sight of their returned leader. Prophet Joseph had come back! The Lord had preserved him! He would answer the damned liars! He would triumph over the persecutors as he always had before! The Faithful in an ecstasy of relief and joy reaffirmed their trust in Zion, and the Sunday was given over to rejoicing.

That evening, in the Temple Grove, the Prophet addressed his people. In spite of the gloomy forebodings, which each hour of the passing day had intensified, the man was stirred to something of the old warmth and fervour by the adoring thousands, whose upturned faces spoke of fanatical faith and determined loyalty. The apostates had fled. There were no outsiders, for all entrances to Nauvoo were guarded. His audience that night belonged to him, body and soul. It was his hour and the Prophet took it to his heart. Near the close of the address his rich, full voice rang through the grove, quivering with intensity :

"I call upon you all, my brethren, to consecrate your lives, your property, your loyalty to the Church of Mormon. Do not cease fighting for your rights, as free citizens, to believe and practise the doctrines of the Holy Book. I have spoken to you only what was revealed. I may be reviled and persecuted—even killed—for declaring God's will, but you must live and die for what has been revealed to us. Do you promise to stand by your servant, God's Prophet, unto the end—to sustain the laws of your religion and of your Holy City, even with your lives; do you promise, brethren, sisters?"

From the audience rose a mighty shout: "We do, Prophet Joseph! Praise God, we're with you!"

"Thank you, my friends. I call upon all the angels to witness my oath: to deliver myself up to the enemy for the safety of you, my people. I go a hostage to the accusers to save you from oppression, persecution, revilement—I go, willing, if need be, to spill every drop of blood in defence of the Faith——"

Groans of suffering swept the grove and torch-lit faces gleamed like masks of pain as the resonant, dramatic voice climbed to its powerful peroration :

"I go—your Seer, Revelator, Prophet—with a conscience void of offence towards man or God! If I die, it is for you to avenge my innocent blood—to proclaim the martyrdom of your Prophet!"

His face was white and tense with emotion as he lifted his long arms to pray. Fifteen thousand exalted people, sobbing and

praying, fell to their knees to receive the benediction, chanted in the high, running tones of an ecstasy bordering on pain.

"Almighty Giver of the *Golden Book of Mormon*, Divine Angel of Revelations, into Thy hands I place my children. Bless and comfort them as Thy servant follows the light upon the thorny path Revealed. Sustain Thy Prophet, strengthen his arm to meet his allotted fate, and give these Thy children power to carry on, at whatever cost, the one and only Glory—the True Faith!"

He finished. The great crowds pressed near, closed in about him, eager to see him closely—to touch the Holy One! Suddenly, in the midst of it all, he was very tired. The straining, credulous faces of the thousands began to take on grotesque shapes. Abruptly he broke away from the multitude and hurried into the protecting circle of darkness surrounding the torch-lighted grove.

None would have recognized in the slouching man who plodded homeward by the darkest streets the impassioned Prophet of the hour before. With bent head and drooping shoulders he went furtively, by back streets, shying away from people. He was tired, sick at heart.

At the Palace a light still burned in Emma's bedroom. Joe, hot and exhausted, sank listlessly upon the heavy oak bench on the grassy bank of the river—Sister Emma's chair, it was called; here she sat, hour upon hour, sewing, reading, thinking. . . . Joe gazed up at the pale mellow glow at her windows, then with a sigh turned his back and stared moodily upon the stream. A waning moon, dull-red, half-way to the zenith, moved feverishly behind the pale, sickly mist that wrapped the scarcely breathing world in sinister shadows. All about him lurked menacing dangers—Nauvoo's apostates, Carthage's angry citizens, Warsaw's mobs clamouring for his blood. . . . Somewhere in his own city slept the deputies, coming to get him in the morning. Reason told him that he would triumph—even now. Hadn't he always before! But a deep, lurking instinct warned him to flee this trial. He hated everything that crowded about him. But there, across the river, lay another world. . . .

With the burning thirst of a drunkard he thought of the secret island where only last night he and Caleb lolled at ease, drinking, playing cards, talking of their great trek west. Peering longingly across the stream, he felt a mighty urge to get into the boat there at the landing and go—now—alone! He could be there in an hour, and by eight in the morning, when the marshal came to arrest him, he would be far on the trail west. He laughed, picturing their consternation—"To hell with the damned officials," his lips muttered.

Quickly the mood to escape passed, as a great lassitude enveloped him. No fun being hunted, running away, getting trapped, shot down at last! Let 'em come—let things take their course—the whole business was too damned much trouble! He was tired—wanted to sleep!

Turning back to the Palace, he found it dark. So Emma was asleep up there. Quietly he entered and went to his room.

But sleep did not come. As he tossed and turned upon his wide bed, all the past came back and lived before him, things he had forgotten, things he had not thought of for years—the way a certain boy in Palmyra had laughed at his ragged hat and torn trousers! Joe felt again a wave of flaming hatred towards that boy sweep over him. His first theft—of a young pig—and his mother's sly commendation as she said sanctimoniously, "The Lord always provides for His own. . . ." Then the time he had been chased from the swimming hole on Mill Creek—"Shouting Smiths!"—"Pig Thieves!"—"Money Diggers!"—"Water Witches!" A sharp stone thrown at him had cut his shoulder. . . . He had retaliated by stealing a calf from the gang leader's father. On and on ran his thoughts. . . . Then Emma! He had first seen her on the streets of Harmony, coming from her music lesson. She had worn a plaid silk dress. How pretty she was! Meetings by Cascade Falls . . . Jenny Vale, dead, under that pounding water . . . Emma, clinging to him, her lips childishly warm and trusting. . . . "God—I can't stand this! I'll go mad if I don't get some sleep!"

His watch said two o'clock. The moon was sliding towards the west when Joe went down the hall to Emma's door and knocked softly. No response. He turned the knob and entered. The room was flooded with the dying light. Emma's bed was drawn near a window for air. Joe stood beside her, looking down upon her sleeping form. She lay straight and still, one arm behind her head lifting it into bold relief in the eerie light. The soft muslin ruffle of her gown lay low upon her throat and breast, which glowed like alabaster. Her unbound hair was thrown back across the pillow—in a dark flood—like the river, Joe thought. He gazed in awe and wonder. Was this Emma—his wife? In her utter stillness, remoteness, she seemed alien, unknown—not like a dead person, but like a statue, beautiful and cool. As he gazed, his fears and uncertainties vanished and his harassed brain struggled oddly with simple thoughts. Sleep—Death! What were they? He lost track of time. He was content, safe, here, watching this woman sleep. But could she be real?—she had not stirred.

As he leaned nearer to see the rise and fall of her breast, Emma opened her eyes and looked full into his own.

"What is wrong? Is anything the matter?" She started to rise.

"No—I didn't mean to wake you." Unable to throw off the mood of the last few moments, he explained truthfully, "I couldn't sleep—I came—I—well—I don't know—I guess I didn't want to be alone."

Emma was wide awake. She could see his face plainly, and in the mysteriously illuminating quality that moonlight has she saw that he was afraid! Curbing expression of a quick surge of compassion, she said simply as she moved nearer the other side of the bed, "The room is quite cool. Lie here beside me and perhaps you will sleep."

Just a fraction of a second he hesitated as though uncertain of what she had said. Then, in utter weariness, he gratefully stretched himself on the bed, carefully composing his large body to avoid disturbing her. But Emma's arm went under his head, gently bringing it to rest against her shoulder. Instinctively, out of old habit, her free hand smoothed back the hair from his forehead, and she murmured softly, "Sleep now—close your eyes—stop worrying—sleep."

He did not speak, but obediently closed his eyes and fell into a deep and peaceful slumber, somehow comforted and sustained by transient mysteries he could not understand.

But sleep had deserted the woman who lay very still, careful not to disturb the man resting at her breast. Keeping her vigil, she saw the wan moon fade into the west and the Iowa bluffs emerge into an amber dawn. With a terribly clear detachment her thoughts brought into the room old spectres she had hoped buried—old hopes and longings she had believed dead. It had been two years since they had lain thus—together. Why—to-night? The strangeness! He was lying here in her arms as of old. But so differently! The humility of his "I guess I didn't want to be alone"! He was actually afraid! Of to-morrow? Poor man—to have silly fears when he had faced far greater dangers with reckless courage! He would come through this one as he had the others, and then begin all over again. . . . She sighed. Out West, perhaps—that would be best. But his coming into the room so quietly, "I didn't mean to wake you!" How long had he been looking at her? Trembling—afraid! How tired he was—how like a child he slept. . . .

She studied his face. In that odd intimate light he lay pitilessly revealed—his soft mouth, the sharp lines about his eyes, the telling planes of his cheeks—but still handsome, something powerful and alive about him even as he slept. Something in her heart questioned, "Had she done her part? Had she done right?"

The past two years of exile had punished her, and perhaps she might have held him. If she could have grasped a mood like the one of to-night when he was natural, honest, afraid—It was

strange—were not her happy memories of Joe always those of the night? “To-morrow this will seem unreal! But I have this to think about when he has gone West to build other places—for other women.”

When it was quite light, Joe stirred and Emma closed her eyes simulating sleep. Gently he drew away from her, and leaning over her, she could feel his eyes studying her face. She felt his lips upon hers with unwonted gentleness—and then he was gone. . . .

At seven, when they met at breakfast, not a word or a look betrayed the memory of the night’s meeting. Through the Prophet’s bravado, his clowning wit with Sally, Emma thought she felt a quiver of fear—the boy pretending to be brave, whistling in the dark. And in his wife’s steady serenity, her calm assurance towards his little journey to Carthage, the blustering Prophet sensed again the mystery that had held him questioning before the sleeping woman. . . .

At eight the deputies appeared. There was a too courteous exchange of introductory greetings. Caleb was waiting with the baggage in the “two-wheeler,” in which he was to follow the four deputies and Joe, who rode ahead on horseback. The forced, casual gaiety of the scene prompted all to cut short the partings. At the last moment Emma brought down the drowsy Peter—

“See, he is quite well again. Kiss your father good-bye, Peter.”

At the sight of all the strangers the lad began to cry, and Joe kissed him and tossed him into the air, exclaiming, “Buck up there, son! I’ll see you soon! We’ll make a better go of it next time!” Then turning to the others, “Good-bye, Sally, Gertrude! Get some new dishes ready for the first White House dinner. I won’t be detained by those heathen long. Take good care of things here!”

The two girls, who had served the Prophet faithfully, nodded speechless, with tears in their eyes.

At last he turned to his wife. The moment could no longer be delayed. Embracing her, he tried to speak, but no words came. Emma felt his body trembling. As she looked up into his face, she saw that his eyes held unshed tears.

He whispered, “Emma . . . Emma . . . I wish things had been different!” Then, with a tremendous effort, in a loud tone for the others to hear, “I turn the keys of the city over to you. You are boss. I go in obedience to your orders. Mind you, keep everybody well in line. Good-bye!”

Springing abruptly to the saddle, he dug his spurs into the horses’ flanks and galloped madly out of the courtyard, crying with bravado as he waved his hat, “The Prophet goes forth! Hail and Farewell!”

The astonished deputies hurried after their prisoner, and Emma, inexplicably weak and shaken, found her way to the river front—to the oak bench. She watched her husband climb the long hill leading to the main road. On the crest of the bluff—near the Rest Rock—he stopped his horse, surveying the great panorama spread before him. He looked across the river to Iowa. Beyond was the West—the land of yesterday's dreams. Below was his Palace, and, by the river, Emma, watching him go. Raising himself in his stirrups, he waved to her for the last time. Then, with one great sweep of his eyes over the mighty city he had created, he galloped away towards Carthage.

Chapter Fifty-three

AT NOON THREE DAYS LATER IN THE JAIL AT CARTHAGE, JOE SAT AT a rough pine table, laboriously penning a letter to Emma. Three days had metamorphosed the prisoner. He was unshaven, unbathed, dishevelled. His long burning hair, falling over his forehead and across his bloodshot eyes, gave the perspiring man a wild and terrifying appearance. Caleb, on a low stool near the window, listlessly polished the General's riding boots. A torrid midsummer sun beat down upon the small frame prison with merciless flagellation. No air stirred, and the only sounds to break through the quivering hush were the monotonously regular grunts escaping Caleb's open mouth, the erratic scratching of Joe's pen, and the buzzing of a blowfly over a plate of half-eaten food.

The dusty table was littered with newspapers, a soiled, dog-eared pack of cards, a stack of letters, and an accumulation of empty bottles. A large earthenware jug of wine stood on one corner. Several rough chairs, a narrow bed against the wall, and a crude washstand completed the furnishings. On the wall above the stand a handpainted splasher—the contribution of the jailer's wife—shrieked in angling characters, "God Bless Our Home."

The composition of the letter came slowly, laboriously. After an hour's travail, Joe had one page—

DEAR EMMA:

Governor Ford was here this morning and the interview was satisfactory. He insists that I stay in jail because it's safer with so many enemies in the town. The treason charged against me because I called out the Legion is the absurd reason for keeping me here. When the truth is known, they will fall on their knees and ask pardon for the great injustice they have done me. Pierre Fey is the cause of all my troubles. I have it on good authority that he's in Carthage stirring up enmity against us. Just wait till—

Here Joe checked himself and laid down his pen. He didn't want to send such talk to a woman. Taking a deep draught from the jug, he inked over the last three words and began another paragraph:

I am fairly comfortable here. I have a large private room on the second floor. Take my meals with the jailer's family. Caleb is here to do my bidding. The Governor plans to visit Nauvoo one day this week with troops to offer protection to our citizens

and to investigate certain false accusations made by Fey and his gang. He wants me to accompany him, so I shall perhaps see you soon.

Caleb, looking out of the window, interrupted the writing: "Here comes visitors—Apostle Tunk and your brother Hyram. They're crossin' the street now."

With a movement of relief Joe pushed aside the letter and took another swig from the jug as the sound of heavy boots clumping the stairs echoed in the small room. The Prophet's affected jocularity as he greeted the men was instantly checked by the gloom writ large upon their stolid faces.

"What's wrong? Out with it! Speak up, Hezekiah!"

"The Governor's marching on Nauvoo with twelve hundred soldiers."

"You're crazy! He isn't going for several days and I'm to accompany him!" A note of pride crept into Joe's voice.

"But he's gone, Brother Joseph," Hyram insisted. "We passed them four miles out—and our Legion has been disarmed."

Joe stared at them stupidly. "I don't believe it. Why, Governor Ford was here—in this room—at ten this morning. We had a fine talk. It was all arranged. God Almighty! He wouldn't dare—" Joe started up, his face purple, his eyes glazed. "The dirty double-crossers—I've a notion to bust loose from this place!"

"You can't do that, Joe. Carthage is full of troops. The jail's surrounded. Every entrance to the town's guarded. But we can get out and back home two hours before the Governor arrives. Hadn't you better—"

"Here—wait! I'll show these lousy politicians . . ." Seizing a piece of paper, the infuriated man wrote an order, handed it to Hyram, saying, "Ride like the devil! Take the cross cut! Put this in Marshal Huey's hands as soon as possible! Tunk, you'd better stay here. Gather what news you can and report back. Are the Hancock troops here in Carthage?"

Tunk fidgeted. "No, they're with the Governor."

"Then the McDonough militia must be in charge?"

Tunk and Hyram looked away evasively, but at Joe's insistence his brother answered, "They've been ordered home. Left at noon."

The blood drained from the Prophet's face. "What—all the neutrals gone? Do you mean this jail's at the mercy of the Carthage Greys?" Anger and terror strove for supremacy in his face as he whispered in a hoarse, shaken voice, "My God, it's murder!"

Caleb, who throughout the conversation had sat quaking,

peering with piteous anxiety into the face of each speaker in turn, at this point fell on his knees beside Joe and began to wail: "Let's run away from here and let the dear God save us. I'se to blame 'cause I lost de stone. If we gets on the other side ob de river——"

Joe stood dazed, his eyes as dull and unseeing as a blind man's. After a moment he pushed the old man aside and hurried Hyram through the door, commanding, "Ride as you've never ridden before. Rally the brethren—get them here—bring hammers, knives, anything you can use. We'll give these bastards a battle they'll never forget!"

Tunk left a little later to see what he could learn. As he went out of the door, he turned and handed Joe his six-shooter: "I don't think you'll need it, but if you do may God guide your hand, Brother!" About to leave, he turned again: "I almost forgot—here's some letters for you—quite a lot." He handed the Prophet a pack which the latter threw carelessly on the table.

After the sound of Tunk's heavy boots thumping on the flimsy stairs died away, an ominous silence settled over the room. Caleb, his one outburst having partially relieved his taut nerves, sank back on his stool, his grizzled head buried in his hands. Joe went to the narrow window and looked out upon a parched town now wrapped in the dry, yellow light of the afternoon sun. The listless trees were grey with dust. A dozen guards—Carthage men—lolled half asleep against a pump in the yard below. The main portion of the militia encamped a hundred yards away at the edge of the town. With dismayed chagrin Joe watched his old Apostle, Hezekiah, until a turn in the street shut him from view, then turned back to face the ugly, baking room. Restlessly, he paced the floor from the window to the far wall, back and forth, back and forth, trying hard to wake from the nightmare which had gripped him as the full implications of Governor Ford's departure became clear. He felt terrifyingly helpless. If he only had Sidney Rigdon back . . . he'd know just what to do. Or Sayer and Blackwell and Behr! Even Pierre Fey could manage those sneaking politicians. . . .

With a start he realized how completely his fears betrayed him. These men were no longer "of the Faith"! They were the reason for all his misery. God! What ungrateful wretches they were! Although he had sent forth word recalling the campaigners, the really useful brethren had not had time to return—he had sent the strongest the furthest, to the East. What vile luck! At this very moment a lot of them were probably saying their speeches—the speeches he had taught them. Addressing the washstand splasher, Joe declaimed wildly, "The man this country needs . . . is not a corpse, hey, Caleb?"

He laughed raggedly. The mournful negro drew a brandy

bottle from a drawer, poured a glass half full, and silently handed it to his Prophet. Joe drank, slumped into his chair at the table, and stared stupidly at his unfinished letter to Emma. He read, "so I shall perhaps see you soon." The words quieted him mysteriously—Nauvoo . . . Emma . . . the Palace—clean and cool! Moved by some odd impulse, he wrote:

It will be good to be at home again—in God's Palace—in Nauvoo. The Lord moves in strange ways. During these days of my confinement He has shown me my life, as in a book, pointing out the places where I have stumbled.

Here inspiration expired. Reaching for the wine jug, he noticed the letters Tunk had left. Slitting them open with his pocket-knife, he glanced through them carelessly: ardent missives from women, the Heavenly Wives whom he had strenuously wooed during the last two years. Their words of fervent devotion stirred no emotion whatever to-day. Dead stuff it seemed. Impatiently he ran through the pack until he found a letter from Emma. In her clear, firm hand she had written at length concerning business affairs. In marked contrast with the others, it began, "Dear Joe" and was signed, "Your wife, Emma."

He was disappointed.

The interminable afternoon wore on. At about five Joe roused Caleb: "Sing, Nigger! Come out of that well of misery and sing!"

"I'd rather you'd pray, Brudder Joseph."

"All right. I'll pray if you'll sing." The old negro fell to his knees as Joe with closed eyes began: "God Almighty, right now is the time for you to be a God of wrath—a God of Vengeance. We are ready for a miracle, O Lord! Come forth and destroy our enemies!"

Although the prayer was automatic, brief, and dispirited, Caleb sprinkled it with amens and rose somewhat cheered to do his part. Sitting on the three-legged stool, his gnarled hands clasping his knees, he began. Joe, listening, forgot to be afraid. Sometimes he added his voice to Caleb's. Oftener he sat entranced, carried away to indescribable places where there were gods one spoke to and touched, devils one fought and subdued. The primitive, husky minors of the rough, quavering voice penetrated to unknown areas in Joe's soul. Caleb's singing always agitated Joe's imagination—gave him colourful, misty dreams of Power and Glory.

The music ceased. An hour had passed. It was six o'clock. Breathlessly, hot waves of heat swam about them. They would soon go down to dinner. He must finish the letter to Emma. With a sigh he wrote:

*

Days here aren't so bad, but the nights are awful. I haven't really slept since the last——

“Brudder Joe! Come! Look! Oh, my God, it's Indians! I knows we'se goin' to be massacred!”

Joe sprang to the window, and over the shoulder of the crouching negro, looked out upon a strange, terrifyingly grotesque sight. Down the narrow, quiet street a mob of three hundred descended on the jail, their faces bizarrely painted with violent greens, reds, yellows, their heads covered with feathered head-dress. As they came nearer they broke into a trot, brandishing their arms like tomahawks, and emitting harsh, wild cries. Paralysed with terror, Joe saw the jail guard silently disappear.

Caleb, shaking with fear, moaned, “Injuns—— Oh, God, save us from Injuns!”

“Those aren't Injuns, Caleb.”

Joe could see the leader of the mob now entering the yard. He was one-armed and walked with a slight limp. It was unmistakably Sam Sharp, editor of the Warsaw *Signal*, to whom Joe had sent an indignant letter. So! this was the end—the way it was to be—at the hands of those dirty, sneaking Warsaw mobocrats!

He stood a moment, unable to move, his great body stiff and damp with the sweat of agony. The vibrations of death pulsed all about him; he felt them closing in on him with each breath of the sultry air. They seemed to smother him. His heart beat violently as he watched the hideously ugly creatures vault the fence, swarm over the yard, and, yelling insolently, make for the entrance of the jail.

He glanced feverishly about the room which trapped him. Alone with a helpless old nigger! Even in that awful last moment of thought, he felt a wave of arrogant, burning resentment at the trick Fate had played on him. He—the Prophet—General Smith—caught like a dirty rat in a trap! The primitive fiendishness of the forces rushing at him communicated themselves to his temper. His pride was outraged. God Almighty! He'd smash that gang of snarling mongrels out there! He'd let those howling bloodhounds feel the strength of his fist!

The mob was on the narrow stair. Like the ugly roar of waters bursting a dam, they rushed up the passage, as Joe, galvanized by an anger goaded with fear, leaped across the room, swung the door closed, and threw the bolt into place. Throwing his powerful shoulders against the door, he shouted at Caleb:

“Stop crying, Nigger! Bring me that gun—there, on the table! Hurry, you fool!”

As Caleb, stumbling across the room, placed the gun in Joe's

hands, a shot tore through the door, striking him in the chest. He fell to his knees, his eyes rolling in pain, his voice rising to a loud rhythmic wail as he called on God for protection. The wild, anguished sounds from his throat made a curious accompaniment to the barbaric chaos of noises on the other side of the door.

As the mob burst through a panel and began firing, Joe pushed Caleb out of line with the door, and, standing obliquely to the gashed opening, pushed his six-shooter through the hole and fired rapidly. Five of his six shots took toll, momentarily checking the barrage as the mob removed their wounded from the stairway. In the brief respite Joe grasped the wounded negro, who, on his knees, swayed hysterically back and forth, his voice ever louder and more frenzied. "Oh, Lord, send us a miracle! Lord, God, we needs a miracle! Save us! A miracle, Lord!"

Some ultimate, primitive instinct towards freedom led the Prophet in the direction of the window—to get out—to jump! Dragging the moaning old negro, he was crossing the room when the mob burst open the door and rushed in upon him. He sprang upright and back against the wall, his arm spread across the window, his hand grasping the sill. Pushing Caleb ruthlessly aside, the crazed avengers relentlessly fired a barrage of shot at the transfixed Prophet. A dozen bullets pierced him before he gave a mighty cry and fell with a terrific crash face downward on the floor.

But the lust of the inflamed revengers was not satisfied. They leaped forward, roughly lifted the limp giant to their shoulders, and hoisted it on to the sill of the open window. Amid muttered curses in the room and angry imprecations from the crowd below, they shoved the dead man out of the window. The Vandals below fell upon the crumpled body and dragged it to a sitting position under the tall elm, which but so recently shaded the guard. Then, retreating a few paces they, riddled the dead Prophet with bullets, the shots tearing into the soft flesh of the grotesquely sprawling corpse, whose leonine head, bloody and mutilated, fell forward upon the chest as though bowed in shame at this ghoulish ignominy.

When the fury of the mob had spent itself and the last of the bullets of hate had hissed their way into the supine target, the murdering band scattered quickly and with ominous stealth in all directions.

A ghastly stillness, swift and sinister, settled upon the prison yard. For a space the setting sun, a malevolent, flaming red eye, was the only witness of the tragic loneliness of Joe Smith. Then it too dipped suddenly below the dry, brown prairies as though impatient to put an end to the brutal depredation of this day.

When the Carthage Greys returned to the jail a little later, there was no one to arrest! They could discover no witnesses! A little black dog whined piteously as he circled the crumpled form of a dead man's bullet-ridden body; a wounded old negro, completely mad, muttered incoherently in the upper room of the jail. These were all the coroner found when he came to the Carthage jail at eight o'clock that night of June 27, 1844.

Then came Hezekiah Tunk, ashen of countenance, to direct the removal of his commander's body to a room in the hotel—the room to which he had fled when he had seen the mob descend on the jail.

At nine o'clock on the outskirts of Carthage the boom of a cannon announced the murder of Joe Smith. A moment later from Warsaw came an answering boom; and then from across the river, in Missouri, another. Soon, along both shores of the great, silent river, came the sound of church bells, steamboat whistles, gunshots, proclaiming to expectant crowds the welcome news of the annihilation of the Prophet of Nauvoo. It became a night of rejoicing as the non-Mormons in Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa congratulated each other upon the fall of Nauvoo—upon the exorcism of the sinister Church of Mormon, their deliverance from the false Prophet, Joe Smith.

But in his death Joe avenged himself upon his persecutors.

The Prophet was dead, but the Martyr was born!

Chapter Fifty-four

A LITTLE BEFORE MIDNIGHT THE PROTRACTED death left Carthage in furtive secrecy by the Nauvoo road. Accompanied by the Governor's guard of honour flanking the hearse, with Tunk riding beside the driver of the closed carriage, the Prophet set out upon his last journey to Nauvoo.

Hezekiah, tense and distraught, thinking of the numberless times the dead man had travelled this same road, half expected his spirit to rise, touch him on the shoulder, and demand a little more speed from the decorously plodding horses. The old man who had followed the flaming young Prophet faithfully ever since the day of their chance meeting on the streets of Palmyra felt a wave of pity flood his desperately forlorn heart. How proud Joe had been of this Carthage-Nauvoo road—the road of his own building—the road over which so many thousands of pilgrims had travelled to pay obeisance to the Prophet of Mormon! The highway, built along the bluffs, followed the easy, gracious winding of the Mississippi. At intervals an unexpected turn brought a superb view of the great tawny river creeping quietly along the wooded, cliff-bound Iowa shore beyond. Joe had known and loved every foot of this scenic highway which connected his kingdom with the rest of the world. To-night Hezekiah, the Mormon, attempted to crowd back the demons of fear by remembering other rides, triumphal processions, over this road. How Joe's eyes had gleamed with pride as he listened to the exclamations of praise invariably evoked from those who looked for the first time on the beauty and grandeur of his highway!

But a vast and ominous silence covered Joe's last ride home. His faithful rode with leaden weariness, their uneasy eyes peering anxiously into the darkness ahead, each lost in his own brooding speculations. Hezekiah, remembering his leader's incessant flow of speech, felt a flash of trepidation at the dumbness of this last dark ride. Into the abysmal human silence the muffled thud of horses' feet on the dusty road, the slow creaking of the wheels of the hearse, the harsh cry of frogs, the manifold sounds of a still night, came as welcome mitigation to the oppressive stillness of the lonely journey. And the voice of the river—the slow, steady, unimpassioned murmur of the dark waters—came up to them from below, strangely sad but soothing.

Ghosts crowded the Nauvoo road this midnight—ghosts of futility and fatality born of the day's disastrous events. Twice Governor Ford had passed this way—on his march to Nauvoo to investigate Joe's case and on his panic-stricken return to Carthage to forestall the calamity his conscience would not

let him ignore. Ten miles from Carthage he had met the messengers, riding out to inform him of the murder of the man to whom he had pledged his protection. The sickly ghost of the Governor's belated regret hovered ironically over the spot.

Earlier in the day, under a broiling sun, Tunk and Hyram had travelled the road with heavy, fearful hearts to visit their incarcerated Prophet; later, in the suffocating torture of mid-afternoon, Hyram had hastened back to Nauvoo with the Prophet's last order to his people—a written order commanding the Legion to march to his rescue in Carthage.

In the shimmering bronzed hush of twilight, messengers with fresh horses had galloped forth upon the road carrying Tunk's official statement to the Twelve of the murder of their Prophet. These messengers of death had ridden swiftly through the sultry, feverishly red evening to bring the blighting news to a fearful, hopeful people.

Now, a gentle breeze springing out of the parched prairies stirred the unhappy ghosts of these puppet deeds. They trailed in the dusty wake of the spectral cortège, which laboured, dark and alien, through the starlit night towards Nauvoo.

From the north, coming forth to meet their fallen hero, rode the Nauvoo Legion. In full uniform and military formation, their flags draped in crêpe, the grave soldiers rode to the dirge-like beat of muffled drums. In the wake of the cavalry a steady stream of sorrowing, tragic Mormons poured itself from the city into the Nauvoo road. More than five thousand, most of them on foot, fell into the midnight procession, which wound slowly along the tortuous road leading out of the exalted city. When groups, too weary, stopped to rest, there was weeping and wailing—there was prayer and dirge-like song. . . .

About five miles from Nauvoo the two groups met. The long, dark wavering line of mourners halted, and a shiver of penetrating grief swept through its length.

Their Seer, Revelator, Prophet was dead—murdered!

The long-drawn wail of a woman shattered the ominous silence; the cry, torn from the depths of some anguished soul, opened the flood-gates of their misery, and there rushed out upon the velvety softness of the night a mighty lamentation. Wave on wave it grew into a terrible, surging chorus of unassuageable sorrow and despair. Certain of the Governor's honour squad felt their throats contract as they looked upon this vast, dark crowd of people bowed like black ghosts in the dust—like lost souls in the Cimmerian land.

Into their alien minds crept questions—What manner of man was this Prophet? What mysterious power did he wield to stir such sorrow in the hearts of these thousands of grief-stricken people?

The sky was faintly luminous with the deep amber of a summer dawn when the procession at last entered the bereaved city. The entire populace, dressed in mourning, lined the main road as the body of the Prophet was borne through the streets of the beautiful city set high on the proud slopes of the great hill. Past the rows of curtain-drawn red-brick houses, past the Temple, whose marble columns and slender tower glittered golden in the morning sun, past the unfinished university, through the once active business section, on out into the outskirts where tiny gardens and vineyards struggled against June drought, they carried the great oak box that held their miracle man—then along the bluff highway again to the narrow precipitous road that swiftly fell to the river, past the Rest Rock, on to the great stone mansion, the Palace of God, the home of the Prophet.

Emma, tall, still, white as death, was waiting in the large south room. Austere and regal, in simple black, she stood near the double window where with Joe, her husband, she had often received the guests to their prodigal receptions. Tearless, silent, she watched while the men laboured to bring the casket into place. Before her tragic and terrible silence the mass of mourners drew back to leave her alone with her dead. . . .

The faithful gave their Prophet a magnificent funeral. All was done as they knew he would have wished it. A three-day delay allowed many of the scattered campaigners to return—to add their lamentations and their eulogies to the antiphonal choruses of the less articulate but equally bereaved crowds that mourned the loss of their Prophet.

But the Apostles dared not trust his body to the Temple vault designed for him. They feared that the vultures who had destroyed his life might return to vandalize his tomb. With pomp and ceremony the great oak box was carried from the Palace to the Temple, but the sorrowing thousands who waited hour upon hour to pass by the closed, flower-covered casket, to touch the wooden box that had closed for ever on their Holy Man, passed in ignorance of the fact that their tears fell upon two hundred pounds of Illinois limestone. Most of the funeral orations delivered over the impressive bier of the martyred saint issued from men unaware that the earthly remains of the Prophet had been secretly buried the night before in a spot unknown to all save four of the faithful.

Epilogue

HALF A CENTURY PASSED OVER NAUVOO. A COMPLETE TURN OF fortune's wheel transformed the one-time "greatest city of Illinois" into a shrunken village of a few hundred inhabitants.

Of the thousands who once walked the busy streets of the throbbing metropolis which the now legendary wizard-Prophet had made to rise on Nauvoo Hill, only one soul remained who remembered its brief hour of glory. Only one pair of eyes had watched in its entirety the drama of the rise and fall of Nauvoo. Only one heart had known the full measure of woe dealt the wonder-town through the series of shocks that had reduced the "Queen of the Mississippi" to the gently suspiring old crone, sleeping herself into oblivion. Only one remained who, looking upon the straggling houses and deserted streets of the sleepy hamlet lost on an unfrequented back road, could evoke the vision of that other—the proud, defiant city of Nauvoo.

One person, a woman who long ago had said, "Whatever happens, I shall live and die here," held all these memories. Sister Emma had lived bravely, gallantly, through the full story of Nauvoo's history. Her dark, tragic eyes had looked with pitying pain upon the tortured dismemberment of her husband's Kingdom, but, unfalteringly, she had stood her ground, each blow but serving to root her more deeply in the rocky site beside the great river.

Soon after the Prophet's murder, his widow had watched the brutal exile of his people. Again, helpless, she had looked on while the simple baffled folk were driven from their homes at the point of the sword, fleeing, frightened and unprepared, across the river to join in the suicidal march westward—to the ever-vanishing Land of Promise. She had given last aid and succour to these persecuted victims of mob hatred; she had hidden and fed them; heavy-hearted, she had sent them on their way, well provisioned.

And she had watched the pillaging and burning of their deserted homes. In the wake of the militant, organized avengers—good citizens from near-by towns—had come the criminal hordes, the scavengers, who, creeping from their river dens, had over-run the place in the dead of night, robbing it of every removable thing and setting fire to the mighty Temple on the hill.

But Joe Smith's "Palace of God" stood strangely immune to all of these outrages. Not even the ruthless night intruders came near the great stone house at the foot of Nauvoo Hill, wherein the sorrowing widow passed her days in service to her stricken neighbours. Stories of her saintliness, of her courage,

whispered themselves even into the most dangerous dives, and her person and abode, as from an unwritten law, were accorded the protection of a sanctuary, even through the reign of terror in that dark year of 1844. And through the succeeding years she lived in unshaken security, sharing generously in the oddly varied stages of Nauvoo's fortunes—in the slow disintegration of every part of the city born of her husband's curious magic.

On a morning early in October 1897, Sister Emma lay thinking of these things as she awoke to face her eighty-ninth birthday. The faint grey of the dawn was just breaking, but sleep had forsaken her. Within her the significance of the day stirred a mild, pleasant excitement. The intense quiet of the hour inviting reminiscence, she sent her thoughts back across the years. Lying tranquil and composed upon her great bed, she turned towards the deep windows and gazed out upon the cherished scene, while her mind meditated upon her eighty-nine years of living. Fifty-eight of them had been lived in Nauvoo, fifty-six of them within the safe, strong walls of this Palace, and now, a very old woman, she moved in a fresh, young world, companioned by her great-grandchildren, to whom her youth seemed so remote as to lack reality. They listened to her stories of Nauvoo's glory and tribulation, as in her youth they had been lived. Emma knew that she was now alone. . . .

All of her own family were gone. Little Peter, the last of her children, was buried beside his sister in the Nauvoo cemetery. The lad, never strong, failed to recover from the sunstroke of that ill-fated ride in his father's parade. Emma's agonized love and prayer, Doctor Starr's desperate care, failed to save him. The mother's instinctive bitterness against Joe for this final folly was checked by the painful memory of that day's travesties. She had had little time, even then, to mourn her double loss of husband and son. Besought by the leaderless Mormons, children crying in the wilderness, she had masked her own grief to show courage, to inspire in them self-confidence.

But Doctor Starr's keen eyes saw beneath the calm mask, and the night Peter died, Emma allowed him to lift it for a moment. Completely broken by grief, she rested a little against the heart of the strong man who had been her staunchest friend, but when he pleaded urgently, "Let me take you away; there is nothing now to hold you in this place of terror," she had grown quiet, answering sadly, "I cannot leave Nauvoo. Not even you can understand, but I must remain. This is my home."

When Doctor Starr realized that Emma would never remarry, that in some strange way she was wedded for time and eternity to the memory of a man who might have been, he left Nauvoo sorrowfully. Before his death in the 'seventies, he achieved a

success in the East that brought no little joy to the ageing woman, living quietly in the great West.

Ma Smith spent the last ten years of her life in Nauvoo. Perhaps an instinct to be near her son, whom she had first inspired with the dreams of Messianic destiny, impelled her to remain—to refuse to follow into exile the other sons with whom she had lived since the Patriarch's fatal fall from the bough of an oak tree. The murder of the Prophet had hopelessly deranged her already neurotic mind. Emma took her into the Palace, and there for a few years she lived on, a demented old woman, babbling strange, unintelligible stories to long-suffering listeners. Often these stories recalled to Emma those first weird Sunday night meetings in the rambling, slab farmhouse near Palmyra. Sometimes Ma Smith would evade her guardians and escape to the town. Emma would find her wandering, aimless and distraught, among the ruins on the hill-top, and muttering incoherently, "I am looking for the Prophet—my son—the Lord's Chosen—where is he? This is his Kingdom—he should be near—the Prophet—my son—" Emma would tenderly coax the withered old woman home, comforting and humouring her as best she could.

Caleb, too, became Emma's charge. Rheumatic and decrepit, he lived out his days at the Palace, for ever wailing, "I'se to blame for all our woes, Sister Emma; I'se to answer in de Judgment Day 'cause I lost de stone, de magic stone!"

Of all these memories Emma was thinking in the growing dawn of her eighty-ninth birthday, but with the merciful mitigation of emotion which time induces, the thoughts came tinged with a gentle nostalgia devoid of pain.

She directed her reflections to the year 1849, remembering it as the nadir of the city's desolation. In midsummer came the woeful day of a great storm, when, before her eyes, the weakened walls of the Temple shuddered, groaned, and with a mighty roar fell to the earth. To Emma the Temple had stood as a mute witness to the real, if misguided, genius of her husband. In the tornado's furious onslaught she saw supernatural intervention; it was as though an angry God rebuked her for her secret last stand in Joe's defence—as though with a single, final gesture the Almighty swept to destruction the last vestige of the city's wicked arrogance, obliterating in one angry breath the ambitious monument of the false Prophet.

From the shock of this final cataclysm, Nauvoo never recovered its original spirit. Flowers bloomed in its gardens, vines covered its mutilated walls, fruit trees sprang to life, terraced vineyards, sweet and fragrant in the summer air, transformed the scarred hillside; but the city dwindled steadily until in the 'nineties it had become a backwoods hamlet, off the main

road of travel, far from the great railroads—a lost and forgotten village. . . .

The aged woman, thinking softly on these things, felt no pang of regret in the withered city's leisurely existence. All her memories, whether sad or happy, had taken on the quality of a tale read long ago. Years had softened even the remembered emotions of her husband's brutal death. The first sharp agony had in time given way to a tender sorrowing, until now, with all who knew him dead, his name a symbol for storied legend, his canonized spirit the leaven for an expanding Mormonism, her memories lingered on the happier side. Not that she deluded herself; she simply fell in with Nature's plan, allowing time to dim the pain as she dwelt on the attractive, compelling qualities of the handsome General, whose portraits by famous artists adorned the walls of the Palace and whose adventurous life was already the theme of innumerable stories and biographies.

Emma never lost touch completely with the exiled Mormons, those brave, hardy zealots who survived the bloody exodus and the even more tragical flight westward in 1845. From time to time stories came to her of the miraculous growth and power of Mormonism in the distant state which the God-fearing faithful had established. Not all of the banished had gone West; some had fled into Canada, some had returned to Ohio, some had gone back to Missouri, others into Southern states. But it was in the West that the Mormons at last found their Promised Land, the land flowing with milk and honey. Here, through years of patient, self-sacrificing labour, they had built well, establishing a community which for economic and social organization had no parallel in the feverishly expanding nation. In the sweat of their brows they literally wrested from a recalcitrant earth beautiful and productive farms, in the midst of which rose a city more powerful and more glorious than any they had known in the pioneering days of their revered Prophet. And all the while their missionaries carried the glad tidings of great joy into foreign lands. . . .

One spring day, ten years after the General's death, Emma had received a visitor. Tall, handsome, vigorous he was. It had been some moments before she had recognized Brigham Young, whom she had learned by report was now the leader of the Mormons in their western home. Young had been an obscure follower in the Missouri years, but had risen to trusted leadership in the days of Nauvoo's glory. Now something in his poised yet aggressive assurance reminded Emma strangely of Joe as she remembered him at his best. The same unfaltering certainty, the same glowing enthusiasm, the same commanding authority—a leader who inspired people to follow.

"Come West, Sister Emma," he had urged, "to the new City of Zion—to the Jerusalem of the great religion your husband founded—to the Holy Land where the name of Prophet Joseph Smith is sacred! There you will assume your rightful place as the beloved wife of God's chosen—as the revered widow of the Martyred One!"

When kindly but firmly she had made clear her desire to remain in Nauvoo, he had spoken sympathetically: "Perhaps it is best. Your life here sanctifies the place. We shall make of Nauvoo a shrine to which Mormon pilgrims from all over the world will come to pay homage to our great leader, who did not die in vain!"

Even so it had come to pass. Each year the Mormons, reverently and in increasing numbers, made pilgrimage to the last home and resting-place of the martyred Prophet. With a natural, simple dignity Emma met these youthful, passionately devout devotees. But she would never talk to them of the religion her husband founded. Her silence nevertheless only served to enhance the lustrous hues of the legendary mystery enshrouding the Prophet. As the harsh details of his kaleidoscopic career receded further into the past, the nimbus encircling his image became more and more luminous. Emma, following the brilliant history of a living Mormonism, was strangely comforted. . . .

Day had fully come. Carefully Sister Emma rose from her bed and dressed for the gala occasion ahead. Erect, serene, stately—only the slower tempo and fragile quality of her movements betrayed the added years. Slender hands adjusted the white ruching on her grey crépe dress, pinning it into place at the base of her delicate, parchment-like throat with a brooch that enclosed a miniature of General Smith. Gently she smoothed the snowy hair into place over her ears, fastening the soft roll at the nape of her neck with ivory pins and the jewelled comb which a foster grandchild had brought her from Tiffany's just a year before. Finally, drawing a fleecy, lavender shawl about her straight shoulders, she sat near the window, tranquilly gazing out upon the river, hung over with the golden October haze so dear to her heart. The proud head, startling in its antique beauty, retained its queenly carriage. The frank writing of almost a century of generous living could be traced in the network of delicate tracery upon the creamy ivory of the skin. The brows, still dark, framed the eyes that retained the fire of a steady, unswerving spirit—that had faced the world with compassion and understanding.

Emma heard the house coming to life. She listened, content that under Lucia's direction the ritual of her home was moving on, for Lucia, her great-grandchild and the prop and solace of

her life these last ten years, was to her the reincarnation of Judy. When the Civil War had taken Dave Rigdon, Emma had brought the widowed Judy and her four children to Nauvoo. After Judy's death, her youngest daughter, Emma, had assumed the responsibility of managing the Palace. She had married a neighbour, Phillip Carey, and borne him six children, of whom Lucia was the youngest. Then Emma Carey died; the older children had gone away, married, taken up lives in other communities. Only Lucia and her father remained at the stone house, ministering to the needs of the graciously ageing woman about whom their lives revolved with such orderly joy.

The Palace was never without visitors. During vacations the children trooped back from all directions, sure of a welcome for themselves and friends. They mingled with the villagers, and the old stone mansion echoed with young voices. To her own large brood, as well as to those of her neighbours, Emma stood through the years as sister, mother, grandmother, confessor, nurse, protector, counsellor, benefactor, friend. She was a tower of strength and wisdom to the many whose lives she touched intimately; the Prophet's Palace had indeed become a place where the weary might rest. . . .

The door opened and Lucia came in with a breakfast tray.

"Happy birthday, grandmother! But you are up and dressed! I wanted to help you, to-day of all days. Let me see, which is it—the eighty-ninth? I don't believe it. It's incredible! You look ageless!"

Emma smiled fondly at the glowing young girl. Between these two was a subtle understanding. Often, in these late years, she forgot the girl's youth and talked to her as though she were indeed the foster daughter, Judy, who had died thirty years before. It was to Lucia that she sometimes recounted the past, telling her the things she vaguely felt should be passed on, cherished and recorded. "When I am gone, child, you must remember—" and then would follow a story which Lucia would write at the first possible moment in her diary.

Concerning some things, Emma remained silent—even to the girl's insistent questioning. Of Mormonism, the Golden Plates, the Prophet's alleged polygamous Revelations, she would not speak. And of her long widowhood—on that, too, she said nothing, although her great-granddaughter's romantic heart yearned to know the secret.

This morning, pouring Emma's cocoa, Lucia was in a gay mood. "Nathan and his family arrive at noon. That will complete the circle. All of your children will be here to celebrate. Just think, grandmother, twenty-eight for dinner. That is a triumph—to sit at table with all your family!"

"All my family—and not one of my own blood. . . . Strange, isn't it?"

There was no bitterness in her voice, but Lucia spoke in quick sympathy: "I've never understood why you didn't marry again. You were so young when you lost your husband and all your children. Why didn't you take one of your admirers and have children of your own? I'm sure I should!"

"I have asked myself that question often, child."

"Didn't you love them—that famous doctor or that dear old judge who used to come here from Springfield?"

Emma smiled tolerantly at the girl's eager curiosity. "Yes, I loved them both—they were beautiful friends."

"Was it because—did it have something to do with *him*?" the girl asked breathlessly, leaning over to touch the miniature at Emma's throat.

"Yes, it had something to do with *him*."

"Then he was the one great love in your life! Oh, I'm so glad! I've wanted to believe that, grandmother. He must have been wonderful! But how did you bear his terrible death? How did you ever live through it all?"

"I died too, a little while. But there were people who needed me. There were those who loved me."

Pressing her advantage, Lucia asked, "The doctor and the judge? Tell me all about them!"

But Emma put her off. "Not to-day, child. Here, take the tray away and send me the twins. I want to see them while I'm fresh and strong."

Not even to Lucia could she talk of these two friends. Some memories must die with her. After Doctor Starr's death, a great flood of doubt had swept over her. Had she perhaps done wrong? If she had married him, there might now be his children to bring her comfort and joy. With Judge Fetter it had been simpler. She had enjoyed his close friendship until his death ten years ago. Although he made his annual proposal to her on the occasion of his Christmas visits to the Palace, the honours and responsibilities attendant upon his rise to power somewhat mitigated the disappointment of her stubborn refusal. Emma once said to him, "I have determined to live and die here. Would you forsake national honours to live in this village, Frank?"

Although he said he would, both realized it was better to continue as they were. Frank Fetter had discovered what Doctor Starr knew so well—that Emma was married to Joe for all time. As the years passed, the Judge's visits grew more frequent. At his death a great loneliness settled upon the woman whom he had loved for sixty years. . . .

The hours of the golden morning passed sweetly, each

according its full measure of quiet joy to the simple, dignified festivities engaging the mansion. The morning was given over to the visiting great-grandchildren—fifteen of them—joyfully returned for the annual celebration. At noon Emma sat at the head of her long table, watching with a kindly, semi-detached air the faces of three generations gathered at her board.

In the afternoon Emma lay in her chair on the sun-flooded terrace a few feet from the river near the pines she had herself planted soon after Joe's death. Dressed in their "best," her neighbours came to speak their good wishes, to touch her hand, to murmur thanks for the past year's blessings. Each family brought its gift—a bottle of rare vintage, a jar of clear honey, a lovingly made pastry, or some cherished bijou. The simple, kindly folk clung to Sister Emma with a childlike trust, dreading the time when there would be no more birthday fêtes on the river lawn. Each year she seemed a bit more fragile, and to-day, although she greeted them kindly, remembering most of their names, she seemed tired, and a far-away look came more often into her eyes.

The townspeople renewed acquaintance with the children, strolled, happily reminiscent, through the tall rooms of the Palace, took their refreshments on the terrace, then, at five, regretfully said their adieux and went quietly away. Climbing the long hill, they talked with affectionate concern of Mother Emma's health: "She looks like a saint who even now talks with angels"—"She is close to God—that's easy to see." They shook their heads sadly. . . .

Emma sat on in the pale oblique, sunlight and watched the last of her friends depart. The tables were carried away, the children corralled and taken in to supper, but when Phillip would have helped her to the house, she demurred: "Please leave me here a little while, alone. I am tired now. When the sun is gone, I shall come in."

Understanding, the man drew the blanket over her knees and left her. Emma sat alone on the quiet lawn, listening to the deep undercurrent of the river as utter peace softly wrapped her around. She did not think; her spirit seemed one with the natural things about her—with the flaming leaves, the shimmering stream, the smoky haze, whose texture, fragrance, and colour were dearly familiar. She felt rested . . . light . . . eternal . . .

Perhaps she slept and dreamed a little, for when Lucia came to take her in, she said quite naturally, "Judy, when I die I wish to be buried here, just north of the larger pine, fifty feet back from the river."

The girl allowed the "Judy" to pass, but remonstrated, "Grandmother, don't you wish to be buried beside your own

children? It would be lonely for you here, so far away from them all."

"You forget, Judy, I shall not be alone. For myself, I would not mind, but he never liked the river, you know. He said it kept him awake . . ."

A sudden understanding flashed over the girl, but she trembled as the older woman, looking into her eyes, talked as though to Judy Rigdon—to the grandmother Lucia had never seen. Emma's words came with a soft urgency:

"He did not sleep well in prison. He was writing me a letter when they killed him. His very last words were, 'I haven't slept since that last night—' I knew what he meant—his head lay against my shoulder like a child's; he was afraid! Judy, I've thought it all out. The children do not need me; there are so many of them over there on the hill, but here I shall be company for him. . . . Promise me, Judy, that you will do as I request."

"Yes, dear grandmother, it shall be as you wish."

Emma had risen. Leaning on the young girl's arm, she walked to the tall pine tree. With one slender hand resting against its trunk, she stood poised, as though listening. So many, many times Lucia had seen her grandmother stand in just this position. Now she understood.

As they neared the house, Emma spoke, more to herself than to the trembling girl, "Death is a familiar friend. I have seen his face so often. I shall greet him kindly, and I think he may come soon, my child."

He did come soon, and kindly. On an afternoon a month later, Lucia was reading to her grandmother from a much-worn copy of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, a book given to her by Sidney Rigdon at her request. With her Bible, it lay always in the window ledge near the armchair in her bedroom.

Lucia reading, "For substance is like a river in a continual flow—" was interrupted. Emma handed her the Bible, saying, "And now, my child, please read me my favourite chapter."

Obediently, the girl opened the book and began—

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels . . ."

Emma's fine head rested against the chair as with closed eyes she listened—

"Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away . . ."

Emma gave an odd little sigh and her head fell forward, but

Lucia thinking her grandmother had fallen asleep, read softly on to the end—

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

Gently the girl closed the book and found she was alone.

THE END

No character in this story has been drawn with literal historical accuracy. S. B.

